This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

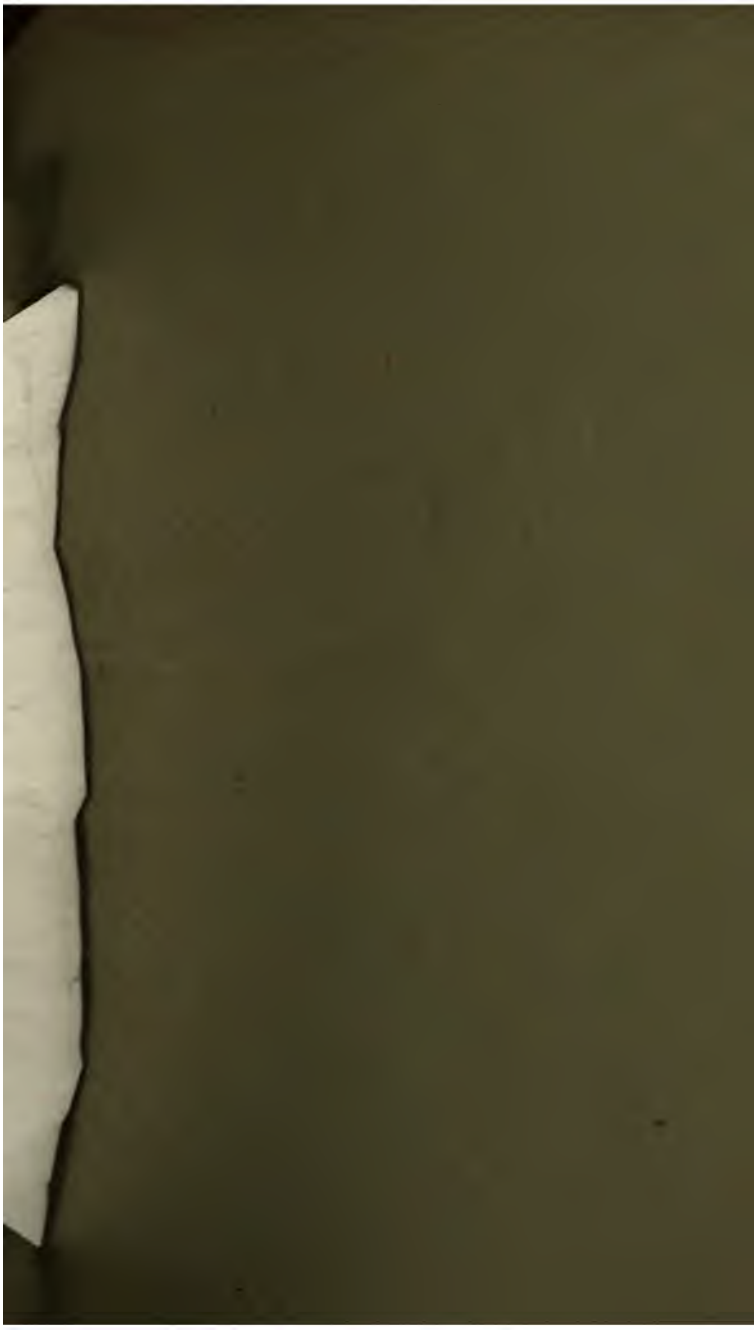
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



Bt. from Dulau

6/-

THE

ONE-POUND NOTE,

And other Tales.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

FRANCIS LATHOM,

AUTHOR OF

ITALIAN MYSTERIES; MYSTERIOUS FREEBOOTER; LONDON; ROMAN OF THE HEBRIDES; THE UNKNOWN; MEN AND MANNERS; MYSTERY; FATAL VOW; VERY STRANGE BUT VERY TRUE; ASTONISHMENT, &c. &c.

VOL. I.

London:

Printed at the Minerva Press for

A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

1820.

1938

Tale the First.

THE

ONE-POUND NOTE.

A TALE OF MID-LOTHIAN.

Let this hour
Stand aye accursed in the calendar. *Macbeth.*

TO THE READER.

Learn to do good from other's harm,
And you shall do full well. LILLO.

If there is a moral contained in the following Tale, the above motto amply conveys it. Of the anecdotes and adventures which are detailed in the subsequent pages the author can only assure his readers that they are most of them strictly true; and that the principal incident upon which the narrative turns, deviates but slightly from a real occurrence in life.

THE

ONE-POUND NOTE.

CHAPTER I.

IT was on Wednesday the seventeenth day of September, in the year 1818, about half-past one o'clock in the afternoon, that William M'Tavish entered Edinburgh by the King's Park, leading through the precincts of Holyrood-house into the Canongate: but as this is not a book of mysteries, we shall immediately introduce him, without ambiguity, to our readers, and regularly pursue his history to its conclusion.

William M'Tavish was the only child of his father Archibald, who, at the time

of his birth, was a reputable tobacconist in the Canongate of Edinburgh, near to the head of St. Mary's Wynd. Being the sole offspring of his parents, he was their idol, and reared by them with every indulgence which their circumstances would permit them to bestow; but as William grew up, and his father found his trade to be daily declining, he wished his son to fix his attention to some other line of life, which promised his industry a more recompensing harvest than that with which his own labours were repaying his exertions; and whilst he was constantly reflecting of opening a fairer prospect to the endeavours of his son than that which a prosecution of his own business presented him, chance threw in his way a not-less-unexpected than promising offer.

The wife of Archibald M'Tavish was an Englishwoman; she had been many years housekeeper to a family with whom she had travelled to Scotland, and in which country, in consequence of her marriage, she

she was now become a resident. She had a brother in service in London, whom she had not seen nor heard of for many years, and by a visit from him she was agreeably surprised, about the time that her son William had completed his fifteenth year. This brother, whose name was Ansell, was now in a most thriving situation, compared to those in which his sister had before known him; he had taken to wife the rich widow of a hosier in Whitechapel, and by so doing had seated himself in a snug birth of independence; nor were his manners less changed than his circumstances — from having been a dashing valet, subservient in his costume to the rules of fashion, and flippant in the jargon of the day, he was now become plain in dress and sober in speech; and his *tout-ensemble* exhibited the money-getting and money-loving tradesman.

It is only necessary to our tale that we should speak of appearances—the heart of Mr. Ansell we have no occasion too mi-

nutely to investigate; suffice it therefore to say, that he had married a woman much his senior in years, and his superior in understanding, who was evangelically devoted to Abraham Chapel, and all the outward forms of religion, who, with all her show of godliness, had preserved sufficient regard to her worldly interests to bind down most of her possessions to herself, who was surrounded by a string of relatives, who would have been truly happy to have discovered any backsliding in the conduct of Johnny Ansell, by revealing which they might themselves have slid into his wife's favour; and that Johnny had been but a very short time a husband, before he found it indispensably necessary to his present comforts and his future hopes, to say as they said, and do as they did; and as no one likes to suffer the world to believe him noose-led, if he can avoid the suspicion, Johnny used every means in his power to persuade the world that he was truly evangelical. However, not being

being strong enough of faith to believe in the working of miracles in the present day, and positively believing that a miracle only could make him the father of a legitimate child, he wished to render himself instrumental to the happiness of his sister and her family, in the best manner in which he was able, and accordingly made an offer to William's parents, of receiving him as his apprentice. After some little consultation upon the subject, his proposal was thankfully accepted, and preparations made for William's accompanying his uncle on his return to London.

Archibald M'Tavish himself was a man of a good heart, a good temper, and a commonplace understanding, which had received only the limited benefits of a day-school education. William, whose disposition greatly resembled that of his father, had, for the last three years, been placed at a respectable seminary in the vicinity of Edinburgh, where he had so well profited by the instructions which he had received,

ceived, as to possess a general knowledge of most of those acquirements which assist the efforts of the industrious for promotion, and facilitate the passage of all through life.

The hour of his departure from Scotland being arrived, William was called upon to take one farewell, which perhaps penetrated more deeply into his heart than the parting embraces of his parents, and this was his last adieu to his dear Jannet Smith. The trade of M'Tavish having, as we have already remarked, been for some time past declining, whilst his expences were daily augmenting, by the education and advancement of his son towards manhood, still unwilling to curtail that son's entrance into life of any advantage which he could find the means of procuring him, William's parents had for several years past let out, as a lodging, a front parlour and bed-room, above their shop and kitchen, which, during that period, had never been inhabited by any other tenants than a Mrs. Smith,

Smith, the widow of a clergyman of the presbytery of Scotland, and her only child Jannet.

Living beneath the same roof, an intimacy had naturally taken place between the young people. During his vacations, William had passed a considerable part of his time in imparting to Jannet a portion of the knowledge with which his studies, when from home, had furnished him; and when he returned to school, her chief delight during his absence was to prepare a surprise for him at his return, in the additional acquirements which she had laboured to obtain: thus constantly occupying the thoughts of each other, the affection of a brother and sister had long been reciprocally nourished by them, and had even been gradually approaching towards a feeling more extended, more tender, and more indissoluble in its nature.

The divided effects of hope and sorrow have been so universally felt and described, that those who cannot appreciate them by

sympathy, cannot fail to define them in imagination; and therefore, without creating any unnecessary delay in our narrative, we suppose ourselves to behold the waving hands of William and his Jannet, as he extends himself over the stern of the London smack, which is clearing her way out of Leith harbour, and she observes his departure from the pier, till at length a misty twilight draws the veil that shuts them from each other's view.

"I know my brother-in-law M'Tavish," said Mr. Ansell, whilst one day conversing upon the deck of the vessel with his nephew, "to be a very good man, and I doubt not that he has taken care to implant in your heart a proper sense of religious duties."

"It was his peculiar care from my infancy to do so," replied William; "and from such opportunities as I have myself had of reading the transactions, or observing the conduct of my fellow-beings, I am convinced that no man can be happy who

who does not entertain a due regard for religion."

"I am very glad to hear your sentiments," answered Mr. Ansell; "you will find a woman of an extremely religious turn of mind in my wife, and as I wish to serve you, I beg of you to conform to her ideas, and to endeavour to ingratiate yourself into her favour."

No more was said on the subject; a prosperous voyage brought them to London, and on landing they proceeded to the house of Mr. Ansell, in Whitechapel, where they were received by his wife, a diminutive, shrivelled, forbidding-looking woman, of at least sixty, with a cold cordiality, which she dignified with the name of religious sobriety, and which a by-stander must have supposed imputable either to absence of feeling, or hypocritical dissemblance.

It is not here our intention, for it is irrelevant to the subject of our work, to enter into a disquisition on these abuses with

with which the followers of evangelical preachers impose upon their own senses, and pervert those conclusions which they draw through the rays of a false medium. The few sentences which occur in these pages upon the subject, are merely introduced to elucidate the feelings produced in the mind of William by the new situation in which he was placed.

His father was a member of the high church of Scotland; he quarrelled with no sects which dissented from his own, first, because he considered his abilities too limited for controversy on so essential a point, and principally because peace with all was the most beloved object of his soul; but he had often wondered in silence why so many deviated from the high road, when the path appeared so unequivocally plain. He had been constant in his attendance twice, and sometimes three times on a Sabbath, at his parish kirk—he had observed the sacraments of his church with the most punctual regularity—

larity—he had never failed to read on every Sunday a portion of the Scriptures to his wife and son, and in the plain language of nature, to explain to the latter his sentiments of the demands made by Providence upon his created beings.—"Willie," he would say, "mind this, laddie, dinna tak the name o' God in vain; dinna tell lies; dinna injure your neebour, nor hurt the brute beasties, and then there will be na fear o' you; but gin ye disobey these commandments, you'll surely gang to the mischief in the next world."

William was a good boy by nature, and needed few admonitions, and in the innocence of his heart he believed that he must be good enough to satisfy his aunt. But, alas! his aunt's religion was the sad reverse of that to which he had been accustomed. In his father's house the seventh had been the happiest day of the week; regular at kirk, decked in their better attire, they met their friends and neighbours joined with themselves in one act of

gratitude,

gratitude, and beheld them recompensed with the smiles of approving rectitude animating their features: the duties of the day being ended, in summer their evenings were passed in refreshing walks, in winter in social conversation around their family fire. Sunday, on the contrary, in the house of Mrs. Ansell, was a day almost to be dreaded; beneath her roof every one was compelled to wear a look of morose despondency, which almost seemed to blaspheme the Psalmist's assertion of the cheerfulness attendant on the worship of God, and tacitly to imply that lamentation was the only approach towards the Divine favour. The day was passed in silence and in sighs; and when its public duties were ended, from thence to the hour of bedtime, a chasm in the operations of life ensued, which compelled an active mind to employ the vacancy in reflections not altogether amicable to the supporters of a cause so very foreign to the mandates and intentions of that real, only, and first

Cause,

Cause, who has delivered the infallible precepts of religion to his created beings in one plain document, and who, it is most earnestly to be hoped, for the sake of the cavillers on the subject of his sacred law, will, in his mercy, forget how frequently party spirit, in its warmth of zeal, appears to lose sight of the Omnipotent cause, and to remember only the sustension of its own opinions.

In this dull, cold, unsociable, and monotonous course, passed on the life of William; but conscious that his absence from home was a considerable relief to the limited circumstances of his parents, he resolved to submit without murmuring, and was occasionally recompensed for the unwearying taunts, reproofs, and lectures, misnamed pious, of his aunt, by the promises which his uncle was frequently making to him of what he would one day do to serve him.—Nearly five years had William now been in London, and knew very little more of the place he was residing

siding in than he had done at the first moment of his entering it. From eight in the morning till ten in the evening, the six weekly days were passed by him behind the counter, and on the seventh, any attempt at a walk exceeding the distance at which his uncle's house stood from Abraham Chapel, was deemed irreligious, and forbidden as a profane exercise on the day of the Lord; and whilst his health pined for the refreshment of the pure air, his aunt obliged him to inhale the sickening effluvia of a lamp, so sparingly provided with the articles of illumination, that he was compelled almost to scorch his eyebrows in its slender flame, whilst deciphering by its equivocal light the greasy pages of an old and tattered volume, ill printed and worse indited, which was entitled "Crumbs of Comfort for the Souls of the Afflicted," and which, as he pursued his task, created in his mind the single idea of how ready man is to curtail his fellows of those comforts which the Giver of all

all has so abundantly provided for their use.

About this time, he was one day agreeably surprised by a visit from Mrs. Smith and her daughter Jannet. To the former had been bequeathed a small property by a distant relative, which the will of the deceased had rendered it necessary for her to receive in person, and she had on this account been compelled to visit the British metropolis. William eagerly made inquiries of her concerning his father's circumstances, and whether she still resided in his house?

To the former question she replied—"That she was sorry to be under the necessity of confessing to him, that his father's business had lately so materially declined, that he had no longer been able to continue an inhabitant of the house in which he had formerly resided in the Canongate, and was gone to keep a little shop in the village of Corstorphin." To his second inquiry she answered—"That the house

house he was now in not being calculated for the accommodation of lodgers, she had been obliged to move into another family in the High-street; but that she frequently called upon her old friends at their new abode, which was only a pleasant walk from the town."

Great was the delight with which the friends, Jannet and William, beheld each other; and William was permitted to take a couple of rambles through the city with his old acquaintance, during which his time was infinitely more engrossed by his conversation with her upon the events of "Auld lang syne," than upon the attractions of the place. The pleasure of knowing her an inhabitant of the same city as himself, was, however, of short duration; Mrs. Smith's business was brought to a termination in the course of a few days, and with the love of home, natural to all sedate matrons, she immediately hastened back to Scotland.

With sorrow William reflected on the progressive

progressive decline in the circumstances of his father, and it was the most earnest wish of his heart, that it might one day be in his power to administer to the comforts of his declining days; but distant, very distant, he considered, must that period be, if indeed it were ever fated to arrive. At the conclusion of his apprenticeship he could only expect to be retained by his uncle as his shopman; in that situation his savings could be but very small, and his father would be daily increasing in age and in necessities.

A neighbour of his uncle's had just obtained a prize in the lottery, which had relieved himself and his three sons, partners with him in his firm, from impending bankruptcy. A small sum of money which he had brought with him from Scotland, so far from having been diminished during his residence in London, had been constantly increasing, for the slender allowance made him by his uncle for pocketmoney, had never been lavished

away

away by him in trifles. A guinea presented to him by Mrs. Smith, had made a great addition to his little hoard; he resolved to be more economical than ever during his apprenticeship, and then to become himself an adventurer in the lottery. He considered that the sum which he should thus expend was too small to be employed in any venture of greater consequence; and he likewise conceived that there could be no sin in attempting to court the smiles of fortune, by the means of a little fund collected from individual privations.

His apprenticeship was now within a very short time of its termination; he learnt that a lottery was to be drawn in the course of a few weeks; and one morning, taking advantage of an opportunity which was given him by being sent on a message for his uncle into the Minories, he took with him his little fortune, ran to an office in Cornhill, and purchased the eighth share of a lottery-ticket, which left him the sur-

plus

plus of only a few shillings in his pocket. By the advice of the seller, his ticket was registered; and he returned home, grasping his lottery-chance in his hand, with a cautious earnestness, which almost convulsed the fingers by which it was secured. On entering the house, he ran to his chamber, and locked away the paper, upon which all his hopes and fears were rested, in his trunk; and then returned, with all possible serenity of countenance, to his daily employment.

The time at length arrived when a week would close the apprenticeship of William M'Tavish; and his uncle happening to be alone with him one morning in a small counting-room at the back of the shop, was just beginning to inquire of him what steps he meant to pursue at the expiration of his articles, when they were interrupted by a man abruptly entering the shop, and inquiring for Mr. William M'Tavish. William stepped forward to answer the demand.

"Are

"Are you," said the man, "the Mr. William M'Tavish who purchased the eighth of a lottery-ticket at the office of —— in Cornhill?"

"I am," was William's reply.

"Then long life, and great good luck, to your honour!" cried the man; "it is this morning come up a thirty thousand pounder!"

The blood fled from the cheeks of William, but instantly returned to them again with the liveliest flush of perturbation; the tears started into his eyes; he sunk upon his own knees, and clasping those of his informer in his arms—"Heaven bless you! My poor father! my dear father! oh my happy father and mother! Providence has heard my prayer! Oh my poor happy father and mother!" burst in reiterated and scarce-articulate accents from his lips.

Mr. Ansell raised him from the ground, and in the course of a few minutes William was able to explain to him the

nature

nature of existing circumstances. And here let us not omit to remark, that although every one knows the present case of William M'Tavish to be a possibility, far be it from us to recommend the conduct which he pursued, as an example to the perusers of our tale, or to encourage the disposition of hardly-earned savings upon so flimsy a chance of success, as the wheel of fortune, thus courted, presents; on the contrary, it will be shewn in the progress of our narrative, that the sum thus innocently expended by the well-intentioned William, if transmitted to his parent in its simple state, instead of being sent out as a lure to amplification, would have blessed him with the happy recollection of having preserved a father, whose loss he was hereafter fated to deplore.

Mr. Ansell rejoiced sincerely in the good fortune of his nephew, and advised him to inform his parents by letter, without delay, of the sudden prosperity with which he had been blessed; but this William re-

fused

fused to do, declaring that the greatest joy which his wealth could afford him, would be the act of communicating the event himself to his parents, and that he intended to set off for Scotland immediately for that very purpose.

Mr. Ansell procured him the money to which his good fortune had entitled him, and having made his uncle a handsome present, which he insisted upon his accepting at his hands, and enriched the library of his aunt, whose former conduct was now in a moment obliterated from his memory, with a complete set of the Evangelical Magazine, soberly bound in black and gold, he prepared for his voyage. A friend of Mr. Ansell's, who resided in Haddington, happened to be at that time upon the point of embarking for Scotland on board a Berwick smack; and his uncle having introduced them to each other's acquaintance, advised William, for the sake of his friend's company on the voyage, to proceed to the North by the same conveyance.

conveyance. The plan was quickly arranged; they embarked; a favourable wind filled their sails, and three days and nights brought them to the desired port.

They landed in the morning, and after refreshing themselves, William and his friend proceeded in postchaises to Haddington, where they arrived in time for a late dinner at the house of the latter, at which William's entertainer, notwithstanding his impatience to reach Edinburgh, would take no denial to his passing the night. When the morning arrived, his hospitable friend compelled him to remain to breakfast; and the meal being concluded, with many promises of renewing their acquaintance, they parted, and William pursued his way towards his native city. The coach from Dunbar, which passes every morning through Haddington to Edinburgh, had not been able to grant him a seat; but accustomed in his youth to long walks, the journey before him appeared rather as a recreation than a necessity; and

 not

not choosing the parade of a chaise, to which he was unaccustomed, he walked on, ruminating on the anticipated pleasures which he imagined himself about to enjoy, and arrived at the hour we have already stated at the foot of the Canongate.

He proceeded onwards, either recognizing well-known objects with pleasure, or viewing, with eyes of inquiry or surprise, the alterations which had taken place during his absence.—"I am determined," he mentally pronounced, "not to make myself known to a single acquaintance, till I have seen my father and mother; and I think there is very little chance of my being recognized by any of my former friends, except indeed by Jannet Smith, or her mother, who have seen me since I have attained the years of manhood, and undergone the change which that age naturally produces." Presently he beheld the old house where he was bred and born. He contemplated it with the feelings of an old friend; and finding himself

thirsty,

thirsty, and considering that he had yet full four miles to walk to Corstorphin, he resolved to enter a publichouse opposite to the former dwelling of his parents, and indulge himself for a few minutes in gazing at a spot which so many recollections rendered dear to him.

He went into the house, and entered a public room, which was upon the first floor, and looked immediately upon the parlour in which he had passed so many pleasant hours in the instruction of Jannet. —"Ah, Jannet," he thought, "you little imagine what a tale I have to tell you now." The waiter at this moment set down before him a bottle of porter, which he had ordered, and poured him out a glass, and William drank it off in silence to Jannet's health.

Finding himself perfectly refreshed, he was departing, when, on leaving the room, he saw the door of an apartment on the other side of the passage, through the centre of which ran the stairs, open, and from

it came forth a well-looking man in the dress of an artillery-serjeant, and behind him appeared Jannet Smith; but it was not Jannet Smith, such as William had before beheld her; her dress was now more lady-like, though infinitely less becoming than the plain habiliments which he had been accustomed to see her wear, and her once-blooming countenance appeared less lovely, and unhappy.

The serjeant was already upon the stairs, and she had turned to descend them—"Jannet Smith," cried William, "don't you know me?"

"William! William M'Tavish! Oh, God preserve me!" ejaculated Jannet. "I canna speak to you, dinna ask me, I canna indeed at this awfu' moment!" and she proceeded to descend the stairs.

"I beg, I beseech of you," exclaimed William, "to hear me, and explain to me——"

"Not now," she replied; "I couldna, I wuldna for ten thousand worlds!" and whilst

whilst speaking, she hurried the serjeant out of the house, and disappeared with him.

William, with trembling limbs, returned to the seat which he had just before been occupying in the public room, and calling to him the waiter, said—"Surely I cannot be mistaken—was not the young woman who just now went out of this house Jannet Smith?"

"Aye, sure, sir," answered the man; "I've kenn'd her lang; when puir Archie M'Tavish kept the snuff-shop o'er the way, she an' her mither liv'd mony a year in the flat above."

"I remember her at that time too," said William; "but she appears strangely altered since then."

"Aye she does that," returned the waiter. "There's been an unco queer story about her and an officer o' the armie since her mither died; I dinna ken richtly what to believe; but she's shurely strangely changed, however."

"Sandie!" cried the shrill voice of the landlady from below, "are ye gane to pit aff yer time wi' haveren there a' day, I'd be glad to ken?" and Sandie was obliged to obey the summons, and depart.

"Whatever has effected the change in the appearance and manners of Jannet, I shall best learn the cause of from my parents," reflected William; and endeavouring to suppress his agitated feelings till he saw them, he quitted the house, and pursued his way through the Nether Bow.

Intending to turn down Bank-street, and to cross the Earthen Mound in his way to the Glasgow road, he moved on, fully occupied by his own thoughts, till arriving about the centre of the High-street, he perceived an immense concourse of people assembled before him, and observed that the bell of St. Giles's kirk was tolling.—"What is going forward?" he asked of the bystanders.

On one side his question was replied to by—"It's a man gane to be hang'd for forgery."

gery." On the other—"There is a criminal to be executed for uttering a forged note."

"Was it to a great amount?" he inquired.

"No," answered a woman, "naething but a one-pound yen."

"Unhappy being," reflected William, "how miserable must be thy sensations! How should I rejoice, if it were permitted me to expend the half of the sum now in my possession in preserving thy life!"

As he advanced, he saw the scaffold raised immediately in front of the west windows of the church, and the rope, by which the unhappy being was to suffer, suspended from the cross beam. He shuddered, for he had never before beheld a sight of the kind.

"Here he comes! He's coming now! Here he comes!" exclaimed the voices of the crowd.

At these sounds William attempted to fly from the spot; but one of those irre-

sistible impulses which form one of the most marked contradictions in the composition of man's mind, and which are not unfrequently known to impel us to witness what we dread to observe, chained him to the spot. He remained, but he feared to raise his eyes to the object of general observation.

"There he is now upon the platform," said a man.—"They're tying the rope about his neck, puir body!" said another. —"He'll soon be gone now, Heaven help him!" cried a third.

At this instant, William accusing himself of something like cowardice, which he resolved to conquer, raised his eyes towards the scaffold. Horror palsied his frame, for in the culprit he beheld——his father.

The first shock communicated to his heart was followed by an utter stagnation of his faculties; but the scene on which his vision was still bent recalled his powers into animation, and endeavouring to force his way towards the scaffold from the entrance

trance of Bank-street, where he was stationed, and in which he was frustrated by the immense crowd which surrounded him, he raved aloud, in accents of the wildest frenzy—"He is my father! save him! he is my father!—his crime amounts but to a single pound! I will give three thousand for his preservation!—Save him! save him!—save my father!"

Those who were sufficiently near to him to hear his words, conceived him to be a madman, and whilst they were endeavouring to admonish him into silence, the drop fell. The ravings of the distracted M'Tavish continued to pierce the ears of those by whom he was surrounded, and some amongst the crowd, viewing his agonized countenance with pity, were beginning to consider how far his assertions might be the effect of truth, when his exclamations were overwhelmed by the voice of the populace uniting in the cries of—"Murder! murder! shame! shame! cut him down! cut him down! murder!"

The occasion of which sentences was, that although the drop, which was intended to have launched the unhappy sufferer into eternity, had fallen, the apparatus had been so injudiciously constructed, that, instead of being suspended, the miserable culprit was rested on his tiptoes.

The sense of horror displayed by the pitying populace raged with tenfold fury in the breast of William; he struggled, with a vigour imparted by the fever of his senses to his limbs, to approach the gallows. The reiterated cries of the multitude were meanwhile increasing on every side, and stones flying from every direction at the unskilful executioner. The glass fell in shivers from the windows of the church, which formed the background of the scaffold, and the magistrates and the officers of the police fled for safety. Still William continued to force his way towards the object of his concern, and had arrived within a few paces of the spot, when he saw a handsome young man, of

about

about twenty-five years of age, and bearing in every respect the appearance of a gentleman, jump upon the platform, and with a clasp-knife cut the rope from which the criminal was depending. William instantly perceived the body of his father to sink from his view; and the next moment, a stone, thrown from the hand of one of the mob, struck him on the temple, and deprived him of all sense.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

It is here necessary that we should give a detail of the circumstances which had led the once good and worthy Archibald M'Tavish to so unhappy a situation as that in which we have just witnessed him.

On retiring from Edinburgh, and fixing his residence in the village of Corstorphin, Archibald had added to his former trade of tobacconist, a few groceries, confectionary, and toys; and upon the slender profits produced by the sale of these articles, he and his wife, with that true spirit of economy in which the country of which he was a native is so well versed, contrived rather to exist than to live.

A few weeks before the present time, Archibald had been tempted to transport the principal part of his stock in trade to a neigh-

a neighbouring fair. In the course of the afternoon a good-looking man, who supported a well-dressed female on each arm, bought some gingerbread at his stall, and desired him to change a one-pound note. The receipts of the day had enabled him to comply with the stranger's request, and placing the note for security in his fob, which had for some time past been unoccupied by a watch, he thought no more of the transaction, till a few days after, when, on presenting the note to a neighbour, it was pronounced to be a forgery.

Twenty shillings was a loss which poor M'Tavish was utterly unable to afford. The discovery of the invalidity of the note took place on a Tuesday; if his last half-year's rent, which had been long due, were not paid on the following Monday, his landlord had declared his positive intention of selling his furniture; and with the twenty shillings, thus unexpectedly lost, he had hoped to appease his wrath. What could he do? He found it impossible to

trace

trace out the person who had practised upon him the imposition under which he was suffering. He had no friend to whom he could apply for assistance; Mrs. Smith was dead; his son William he did not suppose to be possessed of five shillings; and a false pride prevented him from confessing by letter his want of the small sum for which he was distressed to his wife's brother.

He considered that, notwithstanding the great inconvenience to which he was himself exposed, from having taken the note, that, knowing it to be invalid, it must be dishonest in him to attempt to pass it; and even could he win his mind to the transaction, what personal danger might not be attendant on his so doing! He shuddered at the idea, and hoped that it would never again enter his mind.

In the course of the week his wife, who had for a considerable time past laboured under a very indifferent state of health, became seriously ill, and was confined to her

her bed. On the Saturday morning, as M'Tavish was passing through the village, he met his landlord, who was one of those men who are utterly devoid of every feeling for others, and conceive that they do no wrong by enforcing their own rights by any means of which the law permits them to avail themselves.

M'Tavish bowed to him in passing; the man, whose name was Brown, stopped, and said—"Weel, is yer siller gaen to be ready gin Monday first?"

"If it can be procured—if it is possible that I can raise it agin that time," stammered out M'Tavish.

"I'll hear nae mair ifs about it," replied Brown. "I've been fuiled lang enough, an by God! gin it is nae in my hans at one o'clock, I'll roup ye te the door!"

"I beg o' ye to hae consideration, to hae mercy, gin it was only for a few days," returned M'Tavish; "my wife is sae very ill, I'm a'maist affeared she's dying."

"Be she as ill as she likes," answered the

the surly Brown, "if my rent be not paid 'gin the time I hae set, I'll sell the bed frae under her, mind that."

The tears burst into the eyes of M'Tavish; his brutal landlord turned heedlessly from him, and left him to his own miserable reflections.

"Sell the bed frae under my wife!" was the only sentence which reverberated on the ear of Archibald; he almost sunk under the bare apprehension. All day he looked anxiously for customers, though there was little chance of the sum which he wished to raise being produced to him that night.

Late in the evening a boy came into the shop for some trifling articles, which amounted to about half-a-crown, and requested change for a pound-note.

M'Tavish told him that he was very sorry it was not in his power to oblige him; and the boy rejoined, that it was not very material, for that he was provided with money to pay for the articles, but that

that his master would have been glad if Mr. M'Tavish could have accommodated him.

"Who is your maister?" asked Mr. M'Tavish.

"Maister Anderson, the farmer at the fit o' the brae beyond the toll," said the boy.

A sudden thought struck the unhappy Archibald; the impulse of a moment overthrew the unvarying rectitude of half a century.—"As it is for Mr. Anderson, I will endeavour to oblige him," he said. He went into his little parlour, at the back of his shop, opened his desk, took from it the forged note, and having placed the other in its stead, returned back into the shop, and presenting the exchanged note to the boy, said—"I am very sorry, after a', to find that I have not siller to oblige your maister; but perhaps I may be able gin Monday."

The boy received the note, and departed; and M'Tavish continued standing at his

his shop-door, gazing on vacancy, the mute effigy of despair.

The boy was scarcely gone ere M'Tavish became fully convinced of the rashness of the act which he had committed, and was half resolved to call the boy back; but, intimidated at the idea of thus proclaiming his own error, he changed his inclination; and finding himself unfit to converse with strangers, he shut up his shop, and retired to his inner apartment, where he sat silently contemplating his drooping wife.

A few hours verified his worst apprehensions; the forged note which he had taken at the fair had been universally talked of through the village; and, as an incontrovertible proof of his guilt, the note which Mr. Anderson had sent to him by his servant, had been marked with his signature. A search was made; Mr. Anderson's note was found in the desk of M'Tavish, and the law immediately proceeded to take its course against him.

The

The unfortunate man was conveyed to jail; his brutal landlord put into effect the threat with which he had quitted him; and the wife of M'Tavish, in a state which could scarcely be termed existence, was conveyed by the humanity of a neighbour to Glasgow, where she had a distant relative.

M'Tavish endeavoured to meet his fate with firmness, only resolved upon one point, that his wife's brother and his son should, if it were possible for him to prevent it, never know his misfortunes. His guilt was too clear to hope for any mitigation of his punishment; and we have already seen the sentence of the law which was pronounced against him carrying into effect.

When William recovered from the temporary stupor into which the blow he had received in the crowd had thrown him, he found himself in the house of a benevolent surgeon, in the Grass-market, to which he had been kindly taken by its pitying owner,

er, and every attention paying to him which his case required. Immediately starting up from the couch on which he had been placed, and not even inquiring where he was, he declared his intention of going in quest of his father.

The good surgeon restrained him from his purpose.—" If," he said, " the unhappy man to whom you refer is indeed your father, it is, I assure you, beyond your ability to comfort or assist him. You have yourself been considerably more than an hour in my house; and before I had succeeded in removing you from the pressure of the multitude, a second apparatus had been prepared, which can leave no doubt of your father's fate having been sealed long ere this; do not then, by conduct which can render no satisfaction to the memory of him whom you respect, unnecessarily expose yourself to the vulgar taunts and unfeeling criticisms always uttered at random by some of the members of a multitude who have assembled

to

to witness a business of this unhappy nature; consent to remain in my house all night."

"I thank you, sir—from the bottom of my heart, I thank you," returned William, "for the very great interest which you have displayed in my wretched cause, and will partially follow your advice, by abstaining from an unavailing exposure of my feelings to an unsympathizing world; but your kind invitation I must refuse. As one of my parents no longer exists to claim my duty, think how greatly she who survives must, at this moment, require the consolation of her son; I must fly to comfort my mother!" And repeating his gratitude for the kindness he had experienced, no entreaties could withhold him from immediately proceeding to Corstorphin, where he expected to find his parent.

The feelings with which he moved forward may be better estimated than explained.

plained. On arriving at the village, he entered a public-house, in order to make inquiries for the residence of his mother; as he went in, he heard a man reading from a newspaper, which had been printed on the preceding evening in Edinburgh, an account of the unhappy transaction by which that afternoon was to be marked. Had he been able to listen with any degree of composure to this detail, the comments which followed it must alone have unmanned his fortitude.

The assembled group described his father as one of the best of men, who had suffered for the only crime which he was ever supposed to have committed; their pity followed their eulogies. Every one who possesses the slightest sensibility of heart, is aware how infinitely the case of death is hardened to those who feel the privation of any beloved object, by the compassion with which that object is spoken of by the survivors. William burst

burst into tears, and rushed out of the house.

Proceeding on a few paces, he perceived an old woman standing at the door of a cottage; and commanding his utterance as well as he was able, he inquired of her for his mother, and learnt that she had been conveyed to her relatives in Glasgow.

Thither he accordingly, without a moment's hesitation, determined to bend his steps; and uttering a word or two of scarcely-audible thanks to his informer, was pursuing his way, when the old woman said—"As ye hae come the Edinbro' road, Ise warrant ye'll ken whether it's a' o'er wi' puir Archie M'Tavish; but it's nae doubt been that for some hours past."

William heard no more, but darted forward. It was already beginning to grow dark; he had never yet travelled between Edinburgh and Glasgow, but knowing it to be a high road, imagined that he

could not mistake the way. A thick rain was falling, accompanied by a keen wind from the north; but the misery of his mind rendered him heedless of lesser inconveniences, and he abated not of his pace till he had passed about five miles through Corstorphin, when, feeling himself so much overcome by the joint effects of mental and bodily suffering, as to consider that some portion of rest and refreshment were necessary to qualify him for proceeding at all, he entered a house of public entertainment by the side of the road.

He asked for some bread and milk, and whilst it was preparing, inquired the hour.

The landlady replied that it was a few minutes past eight o'clock.

"It is a long way to Glasgow yet," said William.

"It's mair nor thirty miles," said the hostess, "an it's a very bad nicht for travelling. If ye'r prest for time, you'd shurely

shurely better gang wi' the mail-coach; it will be past here in about twa hours time."

William considered that it would probably be the safest and most expeditious way for him to proceed by, and he resolved to await its coming.

An hour passed, during which he was left at liberty to indulge in his reflections, unobserved and unrestrained; for, according to the custom of the country, his landlady had carried his meal into a solitary apartment.

About this time his attention was arrested by the voice of a person apparently in a state of intoxication, whose conversation was strongly tinctured with the Irish brogue, and who was talking to the landlady in the passage.—"Hand us out a drop of the best usquebach your tap can broach," said the voice, "and see if myself doesn't do justice to the drinking of it, my jewel, that's all." And, at the conclusion of the

sentence, a man, in a sailor's blue jacket and trowsers, with a short bludgeon in one hand, a glazed hat on his head, and a profusion of black matted hair hanging about his face, staggered a few steps into the room where William was sitting.

"There's company ben there," said the landlady.

"And I'm company myself, honey," cried the sailor; "and therefore we'll all be company together; and so bring me a drop of the *crater* this way."

William spoke a few words of half-expressed permission; the landlady retired, and the sailor threw himself carelessly into a chair.

At this instant his eyes rested on William—all his former symptoms of intoxication disappeared; he rose hastily, and closing the door, placed himself opposite to William, and said—"Don't you know me?"

"No," replied William.

"I am

"I am sure I know you," rejoined the apparent sailor. "Your father was this day——"

William placed his hand in agony to his head.

"Be quiet!" whispered the man; "be composed! if you speak a word, I am lost! it was I who cut him down!"

The landlady now entered with the sailor's whiskey, who immediately resumed his Irish brogue, and again affected intoxication.

The landlady having once more retired, a few whispers passed between them, at the conclusion of which William's new acquaintance said—"Tell the woman of the house that you will walk on, and let the mail overtake you; keep the straight road; you cannot go wrong, and I will come up with you in a few minutes. You cannot doubt my friendship," he added, "after what you have witnessed to-day; and if you have any recollection of my

countenance, when undisguised, you shall see it for a moment as it really is."

He raised his long black hair, which proved to be a wig, and displayed to William the auburn locks and handsome features of the gentleman who had flown upon the scaffold to his father's rescue.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.

WILLIAM obeyed the advice of his mysterious friend, and quitted the house. In less than half an hour he was overtaken by him—"Well," said the latter, "I am in a scrape already for what I did this afternoon; a hue and cry was immediately set on foot after me, for having opposed the execution of the law; and to-morrow I understand I shall be placarded, and a reward of fifty pounds offered for my apprehension; so I have got out of the way till I see what turn affairs take."

"You must have entertained a very great respect and friendship for my poor father," said William.

"Not I," was the reply; "I never saw him till to-day."

"How came you then thus to interest

yourself in the case of a stranger?" asked William.

"Because I feel as a man for my fellow-beings," was the answer. "And now no assistance can be rendered to your parent, perhaps my society may do something towards consoling you for his loss, and reviving you from despondency. So, if it pleases you, say the word, and we will jog on together; I have neither a family nor a profession to demand me elsewhere; I feel an interest in your misfortunes, which allies me to you with a strength of sensation that is almost indescribable."

William was not a little affected by the kindness of his new friend, but he was unable to utter what was passing in his heart; the stranger comprehended the emotions under which he was labouring, and endeavoured, by not suffering the conversation to lag on his part, to relieve William from the necessity under which he might otherwise suppose himself, of attempting to reply to his professions.

"It

"It is a strange chance by which we have met," continued the stranger; "one of the kind by which Providence often supplies friends to those who have long sought them in vain, amidst the circle of their acquaintance, and regular associates. Adventure gives heart to intimacy; we have not lacked it, Heaven knows; but, for the present, no more reversions to the past. You say you are going to Glasgow; Glasgow will suit my present purpose of concealment as well as any other place, and perhaps better. I know it well; there are holes and corners in that city, in which Y—— W—— might have hidden himself for a century, without a broad brim. But our journey must be on foot; it will not do for me to subject myself to the conversation of stagecoach passengers; you indeed have nothing to apprehend, except it is from being found in company with me; however, let us walk on deliberately, and we shall be safe enough. I have been in some hazardous situations before, but

have always endeavoured to command sufficient resolution not to display any agitation of mind. Half the persons who fall into unpleasant circumstances are hurried into them by their fears: if I am questioned now, recollect that I am no longer an Irishman, but a Highlander, Donald Ross by name, returning to my native country from England, of which I had been to make experiment, but did not like; and never fear my supporting that language as well as you heard me counterfeit the Irish brogue just now. "Plash, shir," he added, imitating the Highland accent, "she's shust com'd home back again to te bonny land of cakes an fuskey; Tonald vas not taught England pretty land ava, honeorie!"

All that William could do was to listen to his friend, and check his own tears, which he alone repelled by his silence.

"Your name, I know, is M'Tavish," continued the stranger;—"what else?" "William," was faintly replied.—"Come,

I beg

I beg of you to endeavour to converse," rejoined his friend; "I am aware what your present feelings must be: but if you do not attempt to resist them at their first impulse, you will find it much more difficult to arouse yourself from them hereafter. My name is George Sandiman; I am an unconnected being upon the face of the earth, who delight in doing good, and yet very often, by the perversity of fate, do harm unwillingly and unwittingly. For what profession have you been educated? and by what chance did you arrive in Edinburgh at the critical moment I beheld you there?"

In a few feebly-articulated sentences William gave the outline of his unchequered life. "If you have the money you mention in your pocket," returned George, "we must not continue walking upon a public road all night. The first respectable house we come to we must enter, and remain there till the morning, and you will thus run no risk of being robbed, as

the owner of the house in which we lodge will be accountable for the money upon your person. I could tell you a curious story of the kind, which once happened to myself some years ago; but of that some other time."

William urged his impatience to see his mother; Sandiman represented to him the folly of his over fatiguing himself, and thus unfitting himself for her consolation when he arrived on the spot where she was. William was overruled, and they entered the inn at Uphall, one of the most respectable in the country; George having first taken from a bundle, which he had hitherto carried under his arm, a handsome great-coat and brown wig, for which he exchanged his black hairs and sailor's jacket; and having directed William, whilst he remained in that dress, to call him Mr. Heartly, newly arrived from London, they asked for the landlord, and William's little fortune was deposited in his care for the night.

"The

"The name of such a sum will, I am sure, lead all suspicion away from me," said George; "for I have not been possessed of the sixteenth part of it at a time for the last six years, I believe. I am blessed with a handsome independence, but somehow or other, like many of my acquaintance, I have always contrived to find more occasions than guineas."

George having compelled his friend to take the appearance, at least, of rest and refreshment, recommended, in the morning, that, however they might judge it right to proceed afterwards, they should take a postchaise for the next stage, as such a mode of travelling would appear more in unison than any other with the character of the sum deposited during the night in the hands of the landlord, and they accordingly set out from Uphall in the manner George had advised.

On arriving at West Craggs it was still early morning; George Sandiman perceived that William was extremely ill, and incapable

incapable of fatigue; and as his anxiety to behold his mother appeared to increase, persuaded him, for another stage at least, to adhere to a similar conveyance to that which they had just quitted.

William acquiesced; at least he did not dissent, for he appeared to be sinking into a state of incapacity for regulating his own proceedings, and to be fully sensible of the great advantage he was at that time receiving from the attentions of a friend.

On arriving at Airdrie, Sandiman professed himself averse to engaging any more chaises, and William, in compliance with the inclinations of his friend, was beginning to aver that he considered himself able to pursue the remainder of his journey upon foot, when George, perceiving a Paisley chaise on the point of quitting the inn-yard without company, beckoned to William to follow him, and turning out upon the road, they walked on till they were overtaken by the empty carriage, with the driver of which George made an immediate

immediate bargain to set them down at the foot of the Gallowgate in Glasgow; by the adoption of which plan they could not fail to proceed in security, as the method of their departure from Airdrie had not been observed.

When they had alighted, George conducted his friend through some back-streets, which led them to the Glasgow Green, and proceeding thence across the wooden bridge, they entered the Gorbals.

Sandiman here led the way into a small public-house, and having ordered a gill of whiskey, and a bottle of small beer, the regular price of admission into all inferior houses of entertainment in that part of the country, he thus addressed William—"You are, I suppose, of course, acquainted where the relatives, with whom you expect to find your mother, reside?"

"I have only one relative in this place," answered William, "an aunt of my lost ——". Again the tears checked his utterance. "I know her address; she lives, at

at least she did live, in a part called the Briggate."

"You have then only to cross one of the stone bridges, not far from where we are now sitting," replied Sandiman, "and you will be at the place. And now mark me—I will write you down a direction where you will find me again; but you must not come to inquire for me till it is dusk in the evening. The spot I have written down is not above half a mile distant from hence."

William received a paper containing his direction from the hand of George, and they parted.

About seven in the evening, as George was sitting in the comfortable parlour of a neat house, situated on the road leading from Glasgow to the village of Pollockshaws, amusing himself with the gambols of four or five handsome children, who were playing about his knees, with all the familiarity of old acquaintance, whilst their mother was making preparations for tea,

tea, which had been some time delayed on account of Sandiman expecting a friend, he heard himself inquired for by the name of Heartly, and conscious who alone it could be that uttered the name, he ran out to receive William, and to introduce him to his entertainer.

He observed the countenance of William dreadful to behold; it was almost too pallid to admit the idea of its being the face of an animated being; his eyes appeared half-closed and senseless; his lips parched and distended; but no friendly tear now moistened his eye, or relieved his heart. He had seen his aunt, and but scarcely seen her; his mother had died of a broken heart, and had been interred on the preceding Sunday; and he found his relative on the point of hastening from one scene of misery to the contemplation of another, by setting out to attend a summons which she had received to attend the deathbed of a sister in the neighbourhood of Perth.

"The

"The world is now a void to me," dreadfully and faintly pronounced William; "amongst the multitude of my fellow-beings who exist around me, I now stand alone as in a wilderness!"

George Sandiman did not reply to this apostrophe, but took his hands in his, and pressed them with a cordiality that exceeded all the powers of eloquence.

"You are not fit for society, especially that of strangers," said George, after a few moments; "neither do I myself wish to encounter any accidental visitors to this house. We have an apartment provided for us above stairs; I will accompany you to it, and remain your only and constant companion, till I see you able to emerge from solitude with advantage to yourself and your feelings."

William returned his friend's pressure of affection, and suffered himself to be led by him to a chamber where beds were prepared for their accommodation, and a cheerful fire was blazing on the hearth.

With

With more than brotherly solicitude did George devote himself to the comfort and consolation of poor William; and as something like resignation, and a quietude from passion, began to steal over the features of the unfortunate young man, his ardent gratitude for the disinterested conduct of Sandiman daily and hourly increased; whilst Sandiman discovered in his new friend virtues and qualities which would have ensured him his partiality, had their acquaintance begun under circumstances even less binding than those which had first introduced them to a knowledge of each other.

For a time George spoke to his friend on such subjects only as interested his feelings, and but sparingly on those; after a while he endeavoured to perform towards him the more beneficial service of withdrawing his mind in some measure from the gloomy subjects on which it was too decidedly fixed; and at such periods he would frequently make the topic of

of his conversation the incidents of his own life, which were neither uninteresting nor unentertaining; for George indeed had not been a man who had moved along the paths of life according to the monotonous rules which govern the conduct of its commonplace inhabitants.

"I have often remarked to you," continued Sandiman, "that I am so extraordinary a character, that perhaps no title can so well define me as the existing spirit of contradiction upon earth. I can be every thing, or any thing, in five minutes, according to the impulse of my feelings; every thing," he with emphasis repeated, "except intentionally criminal; in that particular I can lay my hand upon my heart, with a safe conscience, and declare that I never erred. I have been deemed unfeeling, because in cases of distress, for the objects of which I am persuaded my heart felt more than those who shed unceasing tears, I have not been able to restrain my tongue from an unconquerable propensity

propensity which I possess of endeavouring to raise a smile by any means upon the countenance of grief. It is a foolish and a false idea that joy and grief are inadmissible, at the same moment, into the heart; and from the same reasoning which makes me doubt whether those persons who are loud in the exclamations of their grief, really feel any degree of sorrow, or whether those who are incessant in the expressions of their sympathy, experience any concern for the misfortunes of others; so I judge the real marks of true sensibility are to be found in the conciliating or benevolent action which does not obtrude itself upon the receiver as a claimant for the acknowledgment of gratitude.

"It is my nature, when grief assails myself, to fight it with its own weapons; and in the case of many disasters, to which I have been exposed in life, the ludicrous conduct which I have at times adopted to counteract misfortune, has supported me with the spirit and hilarity to overcome many

many difficulties. A considerable number of the adventures with which my life has been marked would, by a disposition acquainted only how to be happy in prosperous circumstances, and miserable under the reverse, be deemed equally untrue and impossible; but they are not only natural to a mind which is determined to support itself above despondency upon the buoyant wings of hope, but produce such a relief to the feelings, as often not only carries us lightly through the hour of misfortune, but even makes the recollection of past endurances a future source of mirth and enjoyment. Nor have my feelings been confined to myself alone; my fellow-beings have always met my scorn, or shared the warm feelings of my heart, according as I have considered them deserving. I have hated a man past all forgiveness for having witnessed his unprovoked cruelty to a dog that was devoted to his preservation; and yet I have ridden a race-horse, a pampered animal of my own,

own, nearly to death, without remorse. I have almost broken the heart of a woman whom I really loved by acts of inconsiderate unkindness, and yet have challenged a man for having offended the delicacy of a woman to whom I was an utter stranger!"

"An unaccountable contradiction of character, indeed," said William.

"Unaccountable in every point of view but one," returned Sandiman; "in a case where a man is himself an actor, he is hurried on by the impulse of his feelings, and is at the time scarcely conscious of his actions, much less able to weigh their propriety; in the case of another, he has opportunity to reflect, and to appreciate the conduct which he is observing.

"But a short sketch of my history will best elucidate to you my character and ideas, and I will dedicate this evening to giving you a recital of my past life.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

"At the time of my birth," Sandiman proceeded by saying, "my father inhabited a handsome house in the neighbourhood of Jedburgh. It was surrounded on every side by a delightful country, richly interspersed with streams of the most favourable nature for angling the trout—an amusement to which he was particularly attached, and in which, from the joint force of inclination and imitation, I, at a very early age, became his constant companion.

"My mother having died whilst I was in my infancy, my society was peculiarly prized by my father. With his family, who were natives of Banffshire, he had long since disagreed—a division, which, as he had no near relatives in existence, gave him

him little anxiety, and I seldom heard them spoken of by him at all. His fortune was handsome, though not extensive; and having himself received a good education, he was determined upon likewise conferring this advantage on me.

"The first rudiments of my education, which was by no means the least difficult part of the task attendant on my advancement in knowledge, my father himself undertook; and I have often heard him say, that it was a Herculean labour for him to correct me of the vicious pronunciation which I had acquired in the nursery, and to induce me to renounce the use of *Geddart —the tae side and the tither—the stans o' the strat*, and innumerable other vulgarisms with which the sound of a county tongue naturally infects the ear of childhood; for my father having enjoyed the opportunity of mixing in an enlightened circle from his youth, considered it one of the most indispensable requisites of the gentleman to be, as he expressed it, a linguist of the

world, and regarded it utterly incompatible with the character to prove the tell-tale of his country by his dialect.

"Various masters next attended me at my father's house; this was followed by my residing for two years in the family of a gentleman of established abilities in the neighbourhood; and thence my father, without having decided that I should be of any profession, only judging that no education could be complete to which a college had not given the finishing touches, resolved to send me to that of St. Andrews.

"In this seat of learning I accordingly took up my abode, about the period of my entering my eighteenth year. My instructors did not contemn my abilities, nor complain of any disinclination which I displayed for study; but they perceived that I preferred the study of men and manners to that of books and problems. Here I continued, with the exception of the recesses, for about two years, attending

ing with tolerable assiduity to the instructions of my masters, but still pursuing researches of my own, which gave me an insight into many doctrines and ideas not promulgated within the walls of a college.

"About this time occurred the most material adventure of which my short existence had yet been the hero. You will recollect my mentioning to you in the inn at Uphall, on the first night we travelled together, that an instance had once occurred to me, which had convinced me of a landlord being responsible for any property that can be proved to have been brought into his house; and it was at this time that I met with the circumstance.

"My father had himself conducted me to Edinburgh from a visit I had been paying him at Jedburgh, and after an evening passed at the theatre, we dined together on the following day, at a tavern near the head of Leith Walk, from whence my father recommenced his journey home, and it was agreed that I was to proceed to

Leith, and cross the water on my way to St. Andrews, in the first Kinghorn boat which I found ready to sail.

"I have already hinted that I was fond of seeing all the world could shew me; I had also a spirit for adventure, and a desire to try how far I could conduct myself to my own advantage, under any circumstances into which I might be thrown. I accordingly reflected that I might find considerable entertainment in passing a night in Edinburgh, unshackled by my father's presence, which I had never yet done; and instead of proceeding to Leith, I strutted about Prince's-street, and in the evening again repaired to the theatre.

"I shall here briefly state, that I was not at that time so able to cope with the chicaneries of the world as I am now, and that if I gained any experience by my night's adventure, I paid for it. I recollect passing a jovial evening after the play with some choice spirits, and after that I remember no more till I awoke, and found myself

myself in bed in an apartment with which I was unacquainted, and by the powerful light which entered the windows, I imagined the day to be far advanced. I rang the bell, and inquired where I was? I was replied to, that I was in an Hotel near the North Bridge, to which I had been led in the middle of the night by a strange gentleman, who had desired me to be put to bed there; and to my question of what was o'clock? I was answered that it was about midday.

"Half angry at my want of recollection, and half displeased at my adventure altogether, I arose, ordered breakfast, and resolved to proceed to Leith, and procure a passage to Kinghorn as fast as I was able.

"Having concluded my meal, I ordered my bill. When I had parted from my father on the preceding afternoon, my wealth had consisted of four ten-pound notes, enclosed in a morocco case in my side-pocket, and about two pounds in silver in my waistcoat. It would be con-

venient, I considered, to get one of my ten-pound notes changed before I left Edinburgh. I felt for my morocco case, in order to present one of them to the waiter in payment for my breakfast on his return—it was gone. I do not preface my loss with—guess my astonishment, or conceive my surprise—it was gone, and that was enough, and indeed too much for me. My loose silver was safe; I paid my bill out of it, and proceeded to Leith, believing that when I was once on the other side of the water, I could manage to walk on what I had left to St. Andrews, and when there, must invent some excuse to make a draught upon my father's purse.

"On arriving at Leith, I found that the boats that had intended crossing were gone, and that the tide would serve no more that day. What could I do but enter a tavern, and await the following one? When that day arose, the weather proved so stormy, that not a vessel would venture to cross. Another, equally unfavourable

favourable to my expectations succeeded; and my bill at the tavern, which now amounted to a sum that it was impossible for me to solve, was presented to me after supper on the second night, with something like an inuendo that I should find it difficult to procure a breakfast on the following morning without the payment of my old score.

"In this awkward predicament, I, for the first time in my life, knew the value of money, and as necessity is truly the mother of invention, a wild expedient for my relief, which I as wildly adopted, entered my head. On going to bed I complained of illness, and desired the chambermaid to light a fire in my room, and bring me a bason of gruel. These requests were complied with, and when I believed all the family to be retired for the night, I arose, burnt my breeches, and again entered my bed.

"In the morning, when I was meditating how to give the alarm of my loss, the

chambermaid unexpectedly rapped at my door, and informed me that it was a fine day, and a fair wind, and that there was a Kinghorn boat just going to sail. In a few seconds I jumped out of bed, and ringing the bell with violence, made a loud inquiry in the passage who had been into my room? and what was become of my inexpressibles? Several travellers from other chambers instantly flocked round me, whom my vociferations had aroused, and understanding that an article of my dress, containing forty pounds, had been stolen from me during the night, informed me that I need be under no apprehension, for that the landlord was compelled to make my loss good, if I could prove myself to have brought the property into his house.

" The landlord at this moment appeared, and profiting by the hint which I had received, I told him that my father was Mr. Sandiman, of Briar-Bank House, near Jedburgh—that I was a member of St. Andrew's

Andrew's College, in my progress towards which place I had been detained at his house by unfavourable weather—that at parting with my father in Edinburgh, he had given me four ten-pound notes, which had been deposited in a small note-case in a pocket of my smallclothes, when I had, on the preceding evening, retired to rest, and that neither the article of dress, nor the money contained in it, were now to be found.

"Whilst the landlord remained in doubt how to act, the skipper of the Kinghorn vessel entering the house to inquire for the passenger whom he had been taught to expect from it, and with whom I had frequently made the same passage, recognized my person, and spoke in the highest terms of the respectable appearance of my father, who had occasionally accompanied me across the water. The landlord was overpowered; he provided me with a new pair of inexpressibles, put forty pounds

into my hand, and I left him, devising methods to discover the thief.

"But do not condemn me unheard, as most of the world are apt to do their acquaintance. Though I was a temporary knave from necessity, I was not a rogue in grain, for in the course of a very short time I managed to collect the sum of forty pounds, went to Leith, explained to the good-hearted landlord the imposition I had practised upon him, paid him his money, expended twenty pounds on a dinner in his house, and left him with a hearty prayer, that it might one day be in my power to render him a more essential requital for the imaginary loss which I had once been the cause of his suffering.

"The next casualty that befel me was in the shape of a snare spread for me by the god Cupid, with whose blind sovereignty I had as yet scarcely scraped acquaintance. A company of comedians had obtained permission to perform in the city of St. Andrews, and amongst them was a girl

a girl just as fascinating as every man imagines the female who best pleases his eye; but in justice to her charms, I cannot forbear saying, that when fairly rated, she was much more beautiful than the majority of her sex. Her name was Beatrice Lewison, the daughter of the manager; she was extremely sprightly, played all the lively comedy, and in the quick turns of passion, which she ably exhibited, the rays of her piercing eye found a centre in every sensible heart. Mine very shortly became scorched to the quick. First love is the most keen in its attacks upon the feelings, and the most difficult to replace when it meets a disappointment."

William here heaved a sigh to the memory of his dear Jannet Smith.

George mistook the cause of his emotion, and said—"I shall weary you with my comments, and will therefore in future confine myself to plain matter of fact. I soon perceived that Beatrice was aware of the sentiments with which I regarded

her, and was not displeased at my partiality. I easily found means of gaining her acquaintance, and having once done so, enjoyed many delightful interviews with her, of which her parents appeared rather careless than ignorant. Our intimacy had at length proceeded so far, that I felt myself both awkwardly and painfully situated with regard to her. I was unconscious how my father would approve an actress for his daughter, and I felt that I could sooner have sacrificed my life than have made her a proposal of a dishonourable nature, had not her conduct and her conversation long since convinced me that she would have spurned an offer of so degrading a nature.

"I found it impossible to exist out of her presence, and when the company left St. Andrews, and proceeded to the town of Cupar, in the course of a few days I went thither myself, and not having patience to await her appearance on the boards in the evening, I called in the afternoon at her father's lodgings. Beatrice

was

was from home; her father, mother, and an old man, a performer in the company, were seated in the parlour, where I was urged to take a seat also.—'And what has brought you to Cupar, sir?' inquired Mrs. Lewison.—'Gallantry, ma'am, I believe,' I replied, 'to see my little wife Beatrice, as some of the people of St. Andrews used to call your daughter.'—'But you never called her so yourself, did you, sir?' asked Mr. Lewison.—'Oh yes, that I have, a hundred times, I dare say,' I answered.—'I have several times heard you do so,' remarked the old man, 'and so has Mr. Cooper of our company also, when you used to come and take a glass of negus in the public room at the Red Lion, after the performance in an evening.'—'It is very likely,' I returned, half unconscious what I said. The conversation was changed to another subject. Beatrice came home; we drank tea together, and passed a very pleasant evening at the theatre.

"On the following morning, when I was preparing to quit the place, her father was announced, and entered the room at the inn where I was sitting. After he had, at my invitation, taken a seat, and the customary salutations of the day had passed between us, Lewison, who was an Irishman, bearing the marks of at least sixty years of crafty experience in his countenance, said—'I am come to consult you, Mr. Sandiman, whether it is not advisable to withdraw my daughter from her present profession.' I begged him to explain his meaning.—'Why, sir,' he rejoined, 'as I understand your family to be of the first respectability, do you think that they might consider it becoming for her to remain upon the stage as your wife?' —'My wife, sir?' I echoed.—'Undoubtedly, sir,' he replied; 'you have proclaimed her so before substantial witnesses, and you cannot but be aware that by the laws of this country, she will, from that period, be thus estimated.'

"A few

"A few more sentences clearly opened my eyes to what I had before been but indistinctly acquainted with, and I perceived that the old fellow was resolved to avail himself of the precedent that existed for causing me to be regarded as the husband of his daughter. I loved—I adored Beatrice: I believed it impossible for me ever to feel real affection for another woman; I wished to call her mine; I desired to marry her; I would have made any earthly compact to have possessed her; but at that moment arose in my heart, and claimed dominion over all my other feelings, another indescribable peculiarity of my nature. I would not have suffered myself to have been compelled into the performance of any action, although I had been convinced that its rejection would have been productive of my annihilation: and quitting her father with anger, and with indignation, I returned back to St. Andrews, as quickly as my horse could bear me thither.

"On

"On arriving there, I shut myself up in my chamber, and gave way to melancholy and reflection, from which dream I was awakened, not to a relief of my feelings, but to a change of my ideas, by receiving an account of the sudden death of my father.

"This was a period of my life which I must hurry over: I cannot dwell with composure on the recollection of my eternal separation from a friend, a father, a protector, and an instructor, united in the same worthy being. My father had been well acquainted that my disposition was the reverse of economical, and dreading that unforeseen accidents or extravagance might reduce me to want, he had caused his property to be sunk at his death; and I came into possession of an annuity of eight hundred a-year, and a legacy of one thousand pounds.

"The season was the rising of summer, and I resolved to return no more to St. Andrews, but to travel. To this end I went

went to Edinburgh, purchased a handsome horse and gig, hired a servant, and set out on a tour to the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, which I had often wished to visit. The face of nature is in those regions sublime and beautiful in the extreme; and I, for a time, wandered with delight amidst their romantic diversities; but mine is not a mind which can dwell long with satisfaction on inanimate objects, and I returned home, anticipating the pleasures of the Musselburgh races.

"Feeling a wish to introduce myself into society, and to be known, I started a horse myself; and with this distinction, the exertions of a good tailor, and challenging an officer at the assembly rooms in St. George's-street, in consequence of some trifling dispute which had occurred between us, the six days of the race-week gave me no mean celebrity for the sphere of life in which I was moving.

"My jaunt to the south, and my adventures

ventures in the race-week, had nearly melted my thousand pounds; but my annuity was ample and certain, and upon this I, in every respect, maintained the style and appearance of a gentleman. The winter passed off pleasantly; for in Edinburgh, as in all other large cities, there is no dearth of public amusements, concerts, balls, and plays, which last are, of all others, the most expensive; for plays, as Roxalana says of the sultan's supper in the farce, are attended by so many *etceteras*, that the price of admission to the theatre is scarcely a feather in the scale. At the commencement of the spring, I began to find that I had thrice the demands upon my purse that I possessed the means of solving. Being known to have a handsome income, I had gradually gained credit; and of all the privileges that I was ever indulged with by my fellow-beings, (and scanty enough they have been, Heaven knows!) that of being permitted to run into debt was the worst. Tradesmen will trust

trust a man, because if there is a chance of payment at all, they will do any thing sooner than lose his custom; when he purchases upon tick, he is sure to buy more than he wants; and as soon as his name is once in their books, there is no end of their importunities for money. Some of my creditors only grumbled, but some threatened, and that so fiercely, that in order to avoid a visit to the pure air of the Calton, or *a view beyond the grave* from the iron-barred windows of the Canongate, I, by the advice of a friend in the law, removed my lodgings from Frederick-street to the Abbey of Holyrood-house."

"I know that structure to have been the residence of our ancient kings," remarked William; "but of what benefit could it be to you to take up your abode there?"

"You a Scotchman, and ask that question!" said George.

"Recollect," replied William, "that I left

left my native country at fifteen, and that prior to my so doing, my time had been principally passed at school, where usages of this nature were not discussed."

"There is," returned Sandiman, "a grant connected with that abbey, which empowers any debtor who chooses to register himself in the books of the *sanctuary*, as it is called, by paying the fee of a guinea to the bailie, and half-a-crown to his clerk, to live unmolested by his creditors within the limits restricted by the law, which extend over a considerable range of country, to which he has at all times liberty; and on a Sunday, he is permitted to visit any part of the city he pleases, so he is returned to the sanctuary before twelve o'clock at night."

"It is an indulgence that must be liable to many abuses," said William.

"What public indulgence is not?" rejoined George; "and the Abbey of Holyrood House, like the inside of every church, has doubtless entertained both the righteous

righteous and unjust. On my first becoming *an abbey-laird*, the title by which such of its inhabitants as I was one of are distinguished, I had resolved to live economically, and pay my debts; and had even determined to make the experiment of writing a novel, from which pursuit I hoped to derive the double benefit of filling up my vacant time, and adding a little to the weight of my purse.

"I continued to be so industrious for nearly six weeks, that my first volume was written, and sent by a friend to a publisher for his opinion. Poor unfortunate volume! it went out again and again, but brought back no olive-leaf. One bookseller said—'That gin it had been a *novelle*, he might hae luiked at it; but that *romants* were no muckle to the taste o' the day.' Another—'That it hadny the spirit o' the Tales o' my Landlord.'—A third—'That it was o'er sma.'—A fourth—'That if it had but a preface written by ony learned man, or gin it had but

Laatin

Laatin mettoes at the head o' the chapters, he might hae entertained some hopes o' it.'—In short, they all said something but the something I wanted to hear; so in disgust, I threw aside my bantling, and made no farther attempts to expose it to the chill of a northern birth. We all hope to succeed in what we undertake, but I might, from the first, have divined my views to be unflattering. I had always considered the Scotch to be inferior in the genius of novel-writing, either to the French, the German, the Italian, or the English. They have not so ardent a taste for works of fiction as any of those nations, and consequently do not give sufficient consideration to the subject, to be just estimators of all the branches of its abundant produce. They prefer a good essay, a good sermon, a good treatise, a good history, to the works of fancy; they have no love for those light fantastic trifles of literature, which relieve the mind in the same manner as a change of viands, exercises,

exercises, and recreations, revive the tone of the spirits."

"How have you been able to make this comparison," asked William, "when you have, according to your own account, mixed very little with the inhabitants of any other country than your own?"

"Because," answered Sandiman, "I have always been accustomed to think, and to arrange my ideas when I have thought; and I maintain that the feelings of the Scotch, generally considered, are not adapted to the admiration of fiction; and consequently, that works of fiction can expect to gain but few advocates amongst them."

"But they know when to estimate the worth of fiction when it is really excellent," returned William; "witness the works produced by the pen of the author of Waverley; nothing, I understand, can be more popular than they are in Scotland, as well as in England."

"They have every thing in their favour,

vour, as well as their merit," replied Sandiman: "they are Scotch stories, by a Scotch author; abounding in the portraiture of Scottish characters, scenes, and dialogue; and prejudice gives them the sovereign stamp of national praise. No one who has either taste or feeling can deny the very great merit of the author, both as a fabulist and a most accurate observer of human nature; but I doubt whether one-half of his countrymen would ever have acknowledged his merit, if he had not sung of the Land o' Cakes; and I think it by no means the least feather in his cap of literary fame, that he has been able, as he to a certainty has been, to move many minds to admiration of his song in his own country, which had remained untouched by any tale of bard, beyond the milk-maid ditties of 'Peggy and Jeanie laving at the burn,' and 'Tam o' Shanter's mare Meg,' at Alloa Kirk.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

"Well, so much for my authorship," continued Sandiman, after a short pause; "and now for a change of quarters."

"One Sunday evening, having been persuaded to return home to supper with some ladies from the neighbourhood of Hanover-street, who had been taking their fruit and promenade in a public garden in the abbey, a particular fascination for my senses appeared to result from the society I was in; and I was so loth to relinquish the happiness I was enjoying, that I was prevailed upon to pass the night in hilarity, and to return home about day-break, at which time it was judged very unlikely that there should be any persons upon the streets to interrupt my safe progress. Unfortunately there had been a

sharper observation kept upon my actions than I was aware of; and two of those faithful agents of the law, to whose assistance almost every man in his time is obliged to have recourse, darted out upon me from a public stair near the post-office, and lodged me safe in the Canongate.

"It is idle and useless to express dissatisfaction upon these occasions, so I entered freely and harmoniously into conversation with my companions in misfortune, and drank a bottle of the captain's ale whenever my purse would allow me.

"Still I wished to recover my liberty; I was willing to pay every farthing that I stood indebted, and was honestly determined to do so, if my own time were but given me; but as in the case of my relinquishing Beatrice, I would not be compelled to do any thing. I consider an unjust debtor to be as indifferent a character as can exist; but I regard an unreasonable creditor as one of the most despicable beings upon earth. Oh! how often have I

exclaimed

exclaimed to myself, 'what sums of money was I a few months ago putting into the pockets of some of those fellows, who have now destined me to bird-cage light, and I will make them smart for it if I can!"

"Mrs. Fillagain, the lady at whose house I had passed the unfortunate Sunday evening which had doomed me to my present confinement, lived, as has already been said, in the neighbourhood of Hanover-street, where she supported a handsome establishment, in which her nieces, to the number of five or six, all engaging young women, lived with her; and her time was passed in escorting them to places of public amusement, and entertaining their visitors as her own. The old lady, sometimes accompanied by one or two of her nieces, but more frequently alone, used occasionally to call upon me at my new abode; for we had been very good friends, and there was no saying how

good friends we might not be again; and upon these occasions, she was accustomed to relieve my feelings with the douceur of a bottle of wine or brandy, introduced into the prison under the protection of her ridicule. At one of these visits, taking the old lady aside—'Luckie,' I said, the common appellation by which I always addressed her, 'I want most devilishly to be out of this place; I would give half my next quarter's salary to get clear off; can't you assist me?'

'God kens that I would do ony thing for siller,' replied Mrs. Fillagain, 'for I am unco beat just now for twa hundred and thirty pound; so it's no me that can compass a thing o' the kind, my bonny man.'

'If I could put you in the way of making a few hundreds, would you try to get me out?' I demanded.

'Aye, it's likely I might,' she answered. 'God kens I hae a feeling heart, and would

would do ony thing to help you, my bairn; but it man be hard cash, naething else will serve my turn just now, my laddie.'

"I hound her down to swear, that if I could devise to her a plan to gain her the sum of money of which she stood in need, that she would exert herself to the utmost to procure me my liberty. From some circumstances which had occurred between us before, I believed that when she had given me her word, I could depend upon her; and having received her promise to the effect that I required, I thus proceeded to explain myself to her.

"There was at that time a very handsome house in Charlotte-square ticketed for hire; it was situated between the residences of two gentlemen of the first eminence and respectability in the place, who were both the husbands and fathers of elegant and accomplished women—'Now, luckie,' I concluded my disquisition by saying, 'go you immediately and hire that house.'

'Hire that prodigious house!' ejaculated Mrs. Fillagain; 'do you think I am daft? do you no ken the twa houses I hae now?'

'I am no sae daft as ye are,' returned I, speaking ironically in her language; 'do you think that people of their consequence in life would allow you to be their neighbour? no, no; do as I bid you—hire the house; and if you don't receive a handsome sum to relinquish your bargain, say my name is not George.'

"The old lady said, that she saw something like sense, as she expressed herself, in what I had been saying; and that the idea was indeed too good to require a second consideration. She accordingly proceeded to put it into execution, and in the course of a couple of hours, the ticket was taken down from the house. The residents on either side, just as I expected, immediately inquired who was to be their new neighbour. The name was mentioned; and in the course of that very day,

a sum,

a sum, far exceeding my most sanguine hopes, was tendered, and received, for the quitting of the bargain.

"The old lady was highly delighted with my skill in planning, and joyfully promised that if it were possible to get me out of prison by stratagem, which she would use every means in her power to accomplish, that she would lend me fifty pounds to live on, till the next payment of my annuity became due.

"One afternoon, a few days after this occurrence, Mrs. Fillagain arrived at the Canongate, attended by one of her nieces, and I perceived her countenance to be big with the pregnancy of some intended plan. It was a day on which she knew the captain to be engaged at a public dinner; and having liberally poured forth the brandy and ale amongst the prisoners and servants of the house, she called me into my private room, put twenty pounds into my hand, and having told me to proceed towards Dalkeith, which she consi-

dered a tolerably-secure road, and to remain either in the town itself, or in its neighbourhood, till I could write to her, and hear from her again, she assisted in slipping me into her large white petticoat and silk pelisse; and a wig similar to her own, together with her large straw bonnet, and thick veil, having been adjusted to my head, leaving her to equip herself in another suit which she had brought with her for that purpose in her ridicule, I took hold of the niece's arm, and curtseying and nodding to all whom I met in my way, I fairly passed the door; and darting through John's-street into the Pleasance, was in a moment out of sight.

"I passed boldly on, unnoticed, crossing various streets, till I came to Summer Hall, which I considered the most private road to Dalkeith. Suddenly my veil, by some means, became untied, and fell to my feet; and as I stooped to pick it up, I saw a young man staring me full in the face, whom I immediately recognized to be

be a distant relative of the people with whom I had lodged in Frederick-street.—'Ah! bless me, Mr. Sandiman!' he cried. 'I am sure I am no' mistaken; I should ken you ony where, sir.'

"Alarmed, I believe without much cause, I instantly threw down upon the ground some of the silver which had been part of the money given me by Mrs. Fillagain, and exclaiming—'Take that, Davie, take that,' hastily adjusting my veil, on I ran.

"When I had courage to look behind me, I saw him not; but not judging it safe for me to proceed along the road, after what had happened, until it was dark, I looked about for a place of refuge, and observing a neat house, just within a garden by the road-side, over the gateway of which was a notice of '*lodgings to let*,' in I went, and meeting a middle-aged genteel-looking woman in the passage—'Madam,' I whispered, 'I am just at this moment in need of a temporary asylum; if

you will have the kindness to serve me in my present emergency, you may depend upon being handsomely rewarded; and I beg you to accept this,' putting a ten-pound note as I spoke into her hand, 'as an earnest of my future intentions.'—'Oh, thank you,' she replied, 'there is no occasion to pay me beforehand; and depend upon it, as you look a very respectable person, you shall have my best attentions.' —I thanked her, and she rejoined—'You look very large.'—'I must naturally be so, with the bulk with which I am encumbered,' I answered.—'Ay, ay; well,' she replied, 'these difficulties must be put up with, according to the ways of the world.' —'I care for nothing,' I returned, 'if you do but assure me that I am safe.'—'You may depend upon that with me,' she said; and added—'You appear in pain?'—'I am in an agony,' was my reply, 'and my alarm—' 'Ay, but you must not frighten yourself,' the good lady interrupted me by saying; 'think how many have been in

in the same situation, and a little time and patience brings all troubles to an end.' —'What shall I do?' I asked.—'Why, as the case appears to stand,' she returned, 'I would advise you to retire to a chamber which I will shew you, and go to bed.' —'I shall be safest in bed, I dare say,' I answered.—'Well then, you had better lose no time in getting there,' she rejoined; and conducting me up stairs to a handsomely-furnished bedroom, desired me to get into bed, and she would be with me again as soon as possible.

"More inclined to laughter than any other sensation, yet not without anxiously listening whether I heard any inquiries for me below stairs, I lay till the return of my good hostess, who entered followed by a maid-servant, who began to take some linen from a drawer; and her mistress having told me that there would be some tea ready for me in a few minutes, which she considered would be of assistance to my situation, added—'You came

running in so fast, that I wish you mayn't have brought any fever upon yourself;' and following her wish by insinuating her hand into the bed, what was her astonishment at discovering my waistcoat and shirt, which became exposed to her view!—'A man! a man!' she exclaimed, 'and dare to go to bed here!'—'Madam,' I replied, 'I am not conscious of having done any thing wrong; I thought you had understood me to be in need of temporary concealment, and were kindly affording me the refuge I sought.'—'Sir,' she answered, half smiling, yet half displeased, or disappointed, 'I plainly see my error; but I thought you had been a lady come here to be confined; such is the nature of my accommodations.'

"I jumped out of bed, desired her to dismiss her servant, and briefly stating to her the exact circumstances of my case, begged of her not to refuse me protection under her roof, till I believed myself able to leave it with security. She smiled complacently,

placently, for she really seemed a good-tempered woman, only she had been taken strangely unawares, as she said; and probably not forgetting the ten-pound note, though it slipped her memory to offer a return of it, she desired me to come down, and take my tea with her.

"The windows of the apartment into which my hostess conducted me looked into a garden; and as we sat in chat together, I observed a young woman, with her back turned towards us, nursing an infant at her breast.—'That is a young woman that I am very sorry for,' said my entertainer: 'it is very seldom that I speak of the concerns of my lodgers, because their affairs most frequently require secrecy; but hers do not. Her brother is a young man, a pains-taking tradesman in Dalkeith, who placed her with me during the birth of her infant, because he thought she would require better attendance than the house of a bachelor could afford her. She has been deserted by her husband,

who,

who, she has since had the misfortune to discover, was married to another woman before he knew her. Her brother's name is Lewison.'—'Lewison!' I exclaimed; 'merciful Heaven! can it be possible that it is Beatrice Lewison?' for I recollected having heard that she had a brother settled in business in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh.—'I don't know what her Christian name is,' replied my hostess, 'but she has called her baby Beatrice, however.'

"I immediately ran out into the garden—it was that very Beatrice whom I expected to behold—I caught her hand in mine—'Beatrice!' I said; 'don't you know me, Beatrice?'—'Sandiman! is it you, Sandiman?' she half-weeping pronounced, and forcibly withdrew from me her hand. 'I was unhappy enough before, why are you come to make me more so?'—'By Heaven! you misconceive me,' I replied; 'nothing could give me so much happiness as to possess the means

of

of being instrumental to your felicity.'—'Oh, George—excuse me, Mr. Sandiman I mean—you did not always act so,' she said, and burst into tears.—'Oh, hear me!' I exclaimed: 'it was your father who separated us—his crafty and overbearing conduct, as I regarded it, was the cause—it was his fault that we were disunited.'—'But none of the blame of our first acquaintance, our subsequent intimacy,' returned Beatrice, 'could attach itself to him; and you have said a thousand times, that nothing——'—'I know it: I am a rogue—a villain!' I interrupted her by saying; 'but I have suffered severely for my opinion—my pride—my obstinacy, if you prefer it by that name. But, thank Heaven! we meet again; and now——'—'In a very few moments we shall part, probably for ever,' replied Beatrice. 'I live in future only to be guided by my brother. I exclude myself from all the world. He knows nothing of you—never saw you, nor heard of you; I could not explain

explain satisfactorily to him my acquaintance with you; I therefore feel it a fault to indulge in any conversation with you at all, and must beg of you to quit me.'—Oh, William! William! what a woman had I lost! I could have torn out the heart whose perversity had disunited our destinies, and have trampled it under my feet.

"I paused a few moments, then said—'You have been ill treated, and my soul bleeds to hear of the unhappiness which has attended——'—'Yes, yes,' she replied; 'but my reparation must lie with myself—in my resignation to that first Cause by which the events of life are governed.'—'If thus you persist in disclaiming me, and driving me from you,' I pronounced, 'ere I go, hear me pronounce one sacred vow, and may the preservation of my oath be the security of the eternal bliss or misery of my soul! If I can henceforward stand connected towards you in no closer degree, I will be the avenger of your wrongs.

wrongs. Let but the villain who has wounded your peace be found by me, and I will redress your cause. Tell me his name.'—'Never, never,' answered Beatrice, firmly.—'I conjure, I implore you,' was my reply; 'I ask only his name.'—'I entreat you to leave me,' replied Beatrice, and hastily entering the house, proceeded to her own apartment, to which my hostess withheld me from pursuing her steps.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

"THE brief story of my poor Beatrice was, that, very shortly after my abrupt departure from Cupar, she had been compelled by her father to give her hand to an officer whom chance had quartered in the town, and who very quickly deserted her, and was learnt to have fled from justice, on account of his having, some time before his acquaintance with her, connected himself in marriage with another woman.

"Beatrice positively refused to grant me another farewell; and when it became dark, I proceeded to Dalkeith, but forbore to call upon her brother, which I considered to be an unavailing and unconciliating task. At Dalkeith I received from Mrs. Fillagain my stipulated supply, and

and was proceeding to Glasgow, where I might, beyond doubt, have remained undiscovered, till the solution of my debts had enabled me to emerge once more into the world with credit to myself; but I was unfortunately recognized by an enemy on my road to it, and once more became the inhabitant of a jail—that which you must have remarked as we passed through the Green, on the day of our arrival here.

"I have little more to add," George Sandiman proceeded by saying: "I continued in this jail for a period of nearly two years, till I had conscientiously discharged all my pecuniary obligations; and I then left it, with the solemn determination (which I hope and trust I shall have resolution to keep) of never submitting myself to the necessity of passing another night within a habitation of the kind; and I had been returned only about six weeks to Edinburgh, when we first became acquainted.

"But

"But although we have already been in this house a fortnight, and I have appeared to use it with as much familiarity as if it were my own, I have not yet informed you to whom it belongs. During my residence in the Glasgow jail, I formed an intimacy with a man of the most pleasant disposition and most worthy nature: his debts, originating in misfortune, can, in all human probability, never be solved, till it pleases Heaven to deprive his wife's uncle of his terrestrial existence, and place him in possession of the inheritance which must then devolve on him. During the two years that we were companions, he seemed particularly happy in my society; and I had also an opportunity of performing for him some little services, which have made a most indelible impression in my favour on his heart: and when we parted, it was with a fervent promise that we should never either of us need assistance, in the untoward circumstances of life, without mutually seeking it of each other.

other. His name is Nesbit, and it is into his house that I have introduced you. I dare not visit him, because, if I did so, I must unavoidably be seen by some of my old acquaintance, still remaining within the walls by which he is confined; but his wife has transmitted to him, for me, an account of the business which brought me hither, and I am already provided with an introduction to his brother, who rents a small farm across the water, between the little town of Ellensburgh and Lochlomond, where I intend to pass a few months in the amusements of a country life, till the late transaction in Edinburgh is forgotten, and whither I think that you cannot do better than to accompany me, and to endeavour to regain the wonted tone of your mind, by reading and country exercise."

It was now the only wish of William's heart not to be separated from his friend; his little fortune was accordingly placed in the hands of a banker in that city; and, with

with a handsome present to Mrs. Nesbit and her children at their departure, they set out on their expedition.

William had often thought of writing a letter to his uncle in London, but whenever he had been on the point of commencing his epistle, his mind had always recoiled from the attempt; and at length, from not having possessed fortitude to compel himself to the immediate exertion, his wish had never been accomplished at all. He often thought, with mingled pity and vexation, of Jannet Smith—with pity, at the recollection of the hints which he had heard dropt of her unhappy connexion with an officer—with vexation, at the remembrance of the cold manner in which she had addressed him on the day they had last met.

They found themselves extremely comfortable in the house of Mr. Nesbit's brother, in a country at once romantic and beautiful, abounding with the choicest opportunities for every diversion of the field and

and stream, and where they were utterly unobtruded upon by any society but that which was of their own seeking.

It is in seclusion from society that the real bent of man's disposition most effectually unfolds itself; in his intercourse with the busy hum of men, he follows the pursuits in which he sees others engaged, and is so much the creature of his companions, and a slave to the allurements of the hour, that he is frequently almost any thing but himself. In a scene of unruffled tranquillity, where every day is like the former, he naturally thinks and acts with more freedom for himself, and becomes more careless of deviating from the pursuits of others, and resigning himself to those which sooth or exhilarate his own feelings.

The friendship of Sandiman and M'Tavish remained undiminished, invariable—it was founded on a rock, from whence it could only be shaken by some event of moment, and was unmoved by the adventitious

titious circumstances of the fleeting hour. But a few weeks' residence at the farm-house gradually opened to each a discovery of the great dissimilarity which existed between his own ideas and those of his friend. George, as we have already witnessed, possessed a soul capable of the most daring actions, in the performance of which he believed nature and feeling to justify him: he would now not unfrequently pass an hour in lamenting, with all the simple eloquence of real woe, the unfortunate fate of his Beatrice, and, with a solemnity almost terrific, repeat his intention and hope of one day revenging her wrongs. But, as he has himself informed us, he could be every thing, and any thing, in five minutes; and the next hour he would find satisfaction in becoming the merry equal of the hinds at plough, or the fishermen upon the banks, and return with a zest from his conversation with his inferior colloquists, which was incomprehensible to the feelings of William: his

soul

soul was absorbed in one dark, sorrowing, and poignant recollection; and he could only find occasional relief for his feelings in silent meditation, or in the study of that inestimable volume which afforded him the consolatory history of his redemption. The days passed on; George, delighting in the sports of the field and of the water, laughed, whistled, chatted, and seemed to have forgotten every care; and the mind of William appeared to gain some degree of tranquillity from books and solitary walks.

Sandiman's favourite sport was angling, in which art he had gained a considerable proficiency, by his constant attendance upon his father; and near the water, where he preferred to pursue his amusement, stood a small public-house, the landlord of which, a Glasgow-man, who had once seen better days, and knew considerably more of the world than those amongst whom he was now living, having himself excelled in the same sport in his youth,

and George frequently passed an hour in his house, for the double satisfaction of listening to his stories of his success with the rod, and refreshing himself with a glass of his liquor, which was the true Lomond whiskey; and George had a palate to distinguish, and a taste to relish, all the good things of this world.

One day, when they were engaged together in chat, an extraordinary couple entered the house, and asked for a gill of whiskey. The man was in stature diminutive, and in countenance insignificant; he was grey-headed, and his little body trembled, for it was a cold winter's day, under the influence of the breezes which played up the aperture of his kilt. His guidwife, as he called the woman, could have spared as much flesh and sinew from her composition, as would have been sufficient to form another little being like her guidman, without reducing herself to within two stone of his weight by the concession. She was red and brawny—

her

her arms and fists tremendous; but her countenance was rather arch than imposing, and her dress was neat and becoming. On her head she wore a double mutch, through the fine lawn composing the outer of which, appeared the dark-green satin riband which bound her head, and descended, with the wings of her cap, to the central point of her chin; a massy silver brooch connected the sides of her handkerchief upon her breast; her gown was purple stuff—her stockings black—her shoes confined with heavy yellow buckles—a maud was wound round her shoulders—and her snuff-mull carried in her hand. When they had drank their dram, they departed.

"Who are those?" asked George; "they are two extraordinary-looking people."

"They are that," replied the landlord; "but they are no bad folk neither. Their name is Christie; but they get no teetle hereabouts bit the laird and the leddie;

but the callants aften gies them *shaver* at the end o't."

"Shaver! what's that?" said Sandiman.

"Why, what is a shaver," returned the landlord, "but a barber; what they ca' i' the touns like Glasgow a hair-dresser."

"Why, how did they acquire that appellation?" inquired George.

"Why, you see," was the reply, "they hae a bonny bit land o' their ain, wi' a bra' enouch house upon it, about a mile and a half west, for they're weel te do; and ever since they coft that, they got the name o' the laird and the leddie, as I said afore. They're generous enouch sometimes, though they're very close agin at ithers; but she's a comical yen, and she's the grey meer, ye micht see that yersel plain enouch just now. So yance whan they went to Glasgow, whar they gang whiles to gather in their rent, for they hae an auld house or twa in the Sat Market, whan they came there, the laird had forgat

forgat te fetch his razors alang wi' him, and he speered at her, for she carries the purse, to gie him the siller to gang and get shaven at a barber's; so she gied him a bawbee, and tell'd him to pay nae mair; and gin the man askt for a penny, to tell him that it was his pleasure to hae yen at a bawbee. So awa gaed puir Rory—they ca' him Rory, and shure enouch he speered for a bawbee shave. Weel, the barber, I reckon, wasna unco fond o' sicken a prig-gen-doun customer, and he took some auld saw o' a razor, and scrapit puir Rory till he bled like a nout's head."

"But how came this adventure to be known here?" asked Sandiman.

"It would never hae been kent at a'," answered the landlord, "gin he had held his ain gab; but yae day, after he cam haim, he was seein a deed hog, that had been scraped by the butcher, hacket i' the skin, an bludin; and he cried out—'Oh, puir beestie! he's had a bawbee shave, I'm

shure.' So then the hale story cam out, an they tacket the name te him at yence."

"And my leddy participates in the honour of his title?" said George.

"Nae, nae," returned the landlord; "hers is yen by itself—at least there's anither cause for't; it's the best story o' the twa."

"Then pray let me have it," rejoined Sandiman.

The landlord smiled, and resumed speaking thus—"Not lang after auld Mr. Christie cam to be a laird, a cooper i' this neighbourhood, that did a' the wark o' the sort for the folk round about here, went to carry haim till the leddie a wee bitt tubbie, or barrel, that she'd ordered him to mak till her; and whether she thought it owr dear, or was sweer to pay the siller just then, or wanted to raise a bit o' a haver for the joke like, I can't tell; but she said till the man—'Eh, sirs,' said she, 'how cam ye no te get yersel shaven afore ye cam

cam to transack business wi' a leddie?'—'I ax yer pardon, my leddie,' quo' he, 'I came awa frae hame in a hurry.'—'Weel,' replied she, 'depend on't, I'se no pay ye yer siller till yer beard's aff.'—'I hope ye'll excuse me gaen back,' quo' he; 'twice three miles, twice o'er, my leddie, is a lang road for me, an' a great hindrance o' my business.'—'Weel then, I'se tell ye what,' says she, 'if ye like, I'se shave ye mysel.' So away she gaed, an' brought out her guidman's tackle, and fill'd a tanker o' het water off the fire, an' had him lathered, and set te wark upon him, wi' muckle grace, they say; an' I believe it, for she's a body that can de ony thing. Weel, when the cooper's face was washed and dried, quo' he—'My leddie, I hope ye'll pay me now, my leddie.'—'What is yer bill?' speered she.—'Fifeteen and saxpence for the cooperage,' said the man.—'Weel then,' quo' she, 'my bill for the shaven balances yours; an' it's my opinion ye may think yersel weel aff to gie only

fifeteen and saxpence for the honour o' being shaven by a leddie.' It mattered not what the puir cooper said, she wouldna' gie him a coin; but as I've heard say, she treated him to twenty times his due, wi' meat and whiskey, whanever he chanced to ca' at her house; he's been lang dead now."

George Sandiman being a great lover of eccentricity of character, had highly relished the anecdotes related to him by the landlord; but on returning home, thought no more of either the laird or the leddie, till about a month after, when he had an opportunity of being witness to a scene, which convinced him that the leddie was a woman of humour, and enjoyed a joke wherever she could fall in with it.

He was one day sitting at the door of the same public-house, to repose himself a while, to which an unusually-fine day of sunshine and mild weather had tempted him, when the laird and the leddie, on one of their walks about the country, stopped

ped at the spot, and took their seats upon another bench, near that upon which he was sitting. The only person in the house at the time happened to be the landlord's brother, a well-meaning but untutored lad.

"Come, wha's at haim?" cried the leddie; "fetch us out a gill."

The lad speedily obeyed, by bringing out the liquor, accompanied by a piece of oat-cake, upon a plate; and having poured out a glass, wished their healths, drank it off, and presented the next to the leddie. One gill being concluded—"Fetch out the laird's gill," said Mrs. Christie.

The lad alertly performed her command; and, as before, for the plain customs of his country were the only rules of behaviour with which he was acquainted, drank off a glass of the second gill as he had the former.

The second gill being concluded—"We'll be stepping now, I reckon," said Mr. Christie.

"Not just yet," answered his wife; "yen mair, and then."

The third was produced by the rustic waiter, and served by him in the same manner as the two preceding ones had been.

"Now, what's to pay?" asked the leddie.

"Three gills—achteenpence," said the lad.

"Had ye there, lad," cried Mrs. Christie; "there's a shilling for the guidsman's gill and mine, an' the tither's yer ain."

"Ye tell'd me to fetch it in, my leddie," said the lad.

"Vary true," replied she; "but I didna' tell ye to drink it, ye daft gouk! Ye've had yer share o' the whiskey, an ye maun be yer share o' the shot;" and with a laugh wrinkling her lips, which she could ill disguise from her astonished auditor, she departed, beckoning to her little guidman to follow her, and leaving the waiter to console himself for his loss, though

though there is no doubt that it was eventually money in his pocket.

CHAPTER VII.

When George Sandiman and William M'Tavish were sitting together in an evening, for at that period their hours were regularly passed with each other, George would frequently endeavour to amuse his friend, by recounting the little anecdotes and adventures which he had met with in the day; and it gave him uneasiness to observe that any attempts made by him to raise his spirits, did but appear to increase the despondency of his mind.

William expressed a wish to leave Britain, and immediately to proceed to some foreign country, where he and his unfortunate story were not known.

"I am not fond of hasty determina-

tions," said George; "I have so often been disappointed in their result, that I have almost resolved never to make them again; let me therefore beg of you to take a few months more to consider what pursuit it is that will make you permanently happy; and depend upon it, if my society still continues of value to you, that I will not separate myself from you in your undertaking."

William replied to his friend's promise, as he had regularly done to any words of consolation which George had addressed to him, by an ill-repressed burst of sorrow, and replied—"I have only one tie which allies me to my native country; it would be a satisfaction, a very great satisfaction to me, to know the real situation and fate of Jannet Smith."

"I have no doubt," rejoined Sandiman, "that in a few weeks time my offence will be forgotten, and that I may then emerge from my seclusion without danger; and when that time does arrive, I promise

promise you to apply myself most sedulously to gain the information which you desire to obtain."

William sunk into reflective silence, and George proceeded with the adjustment of his lines and hooks.

The days continued to move on unchequered by events, except that chance had frequently thrown Sandiman in the way of laird Christie and his wife, as they were all ramblers alike about the country, and by often meeting, they had at length become acquainted; and George had discovered that laird Christie was the uncle from whom Mrs. Nesbit was, in the course of time, to inherit that property which was to restore her husband to the blessings of liberty.

From the moment that Sandiman gained a knowledge of this circumstance, it became one of the most ardent inclinations of his heart to be able to interest the old pair in the fate of their relative, and, if possible, to work upon their feelings, to

act

act towards his enlargement from prison. His first step towards the accomplishment of this end was to strengthen his acquaintance with them, and to endeavour to possess their decidedly-good opinion, before he ventured to hint at his purpose. His acquaintance with them many opportunities were given for increasing, even to an intimacy which appeared mutually agreeable; but no occasion presented itself for leading to the subject which occupied his mind. He found Mr. Christie and his wife, especially the latter, and she was the all in all of both, though tolerably-good people, yet very strange ones, persons of a contradictory character, even in trifles, and who possessed so little disinterested feeling for their fellow-beings, that they must have a motive for performing a generous action.

In the course of a short time, however, chance presented him with one of those opportunities which not unfrequently start up unexpectedly to the acceptance of men, after

after he has long laboured in vain to produce them by his own efforts.

The brother of the landlord at the public-house by the waterside had lately quitted him, and a sturdy girl from a neighbouring village had taken the place. The girl was young and merry, and George, who suffered no object to escape which was capable of producing him a moment's recreation, used frequently to amuse himself with her in harmless *badinage*.

One morning, happening to go into the house, when she had stepped out, and perceiving that nobody was at home, it entered his head to give her a fright at her return; and for this purpose he concealed himself behind some herring-barrels, which were piled upon each other in a little room, that was dignified by the name of the beer-cellar, and which communicated with the kitchen.

He had been only a few moments in his retreat, when he heard footsteps enter the house; and peeping through one of the chinks,

chinks, of which there were several in the old wainscot door, he saw two men standing in the kitchen, who had before been pointed out to him as belonging to a gang of smugglers, who resided about a woody spot a little higher up the country.

Not wishing to be seen by them to emerge from his present concealment, and conjecturing that they would only call for a dram, and depart the moment they had drank it, he determined to remain in silence where he was.

"House, house," cried one of them, instantly; and no answer being returned to his call—"There's naebody ben," he said, "they'll be a' doun at the waterside, and I'll gang and seek them."

"Stop, stop a minute," replied the other, "let us take this opportunity to speak a few words more upon our business."

The accent of the speaker was perfectly free from the Scottish dialect.

"There's been words enouch spoken about it already, hasn't there," returned the

the other; "ye an' I will find an excuse to remain on shore, and contrive to hide oursells till about ten o'clock at nicht, and then proceed the cannyest way we can to the business."

"But we shall only be two," rejoined the other, "and have no weapons of defence, except my pistols and your cutlass; do you think we shall be a match for those whom we intend to attack?"

"Hoot!" replied the other, "I could be a match for twenty sic as auld laird Christie, an' his wee bit callant o' a servant lad; and surely ye can manage the auld wife; if she's big, she's nae strong, man; and there's nane but them three in the house; an' gin they shriek their sauls out, they canna bring help wi' their noise, for there isn't anither body bides within half-a-mile o' the place."

"Well, well, if you are satisfied as to that," replied the other, "I am content; but I like to know my ground in these cases.

cases. Well then, make you the excuse for remaining on shore, and——"

"Haud yer gab," cried the other, "here comes the lassie."

The girl entered, they each drank a gill of whiskey, and departed; and George Sandiman stole from his retreat unseen by the girl, while she had stepped into the inner apartment, and thought no more of the fright he had intended to give her; a matter of much greater importance now occupied his mind.—"They at least intend to alarm and rob, perhaps to murder the old laird and his wife," he mentally exclaimed; "from all these ills I will preserve them; but the enlargement of my friend Nesbit must be my reward."

He wandered in thought along the road. He knew not whom to select as his companions in the projected enterprise. He was aware that he could command William M'Tavish, but the despondency of mind into which he had suffered himself to sink, might,

might, he feared, prove a drawback upon that exertion of courage which would be required of him in the approaching exploit. He considered also, that although the villains had spoken only of themselves, it was possible that they might bring with them a third, and even a fourth adjutant of their plan; and it was necessary, he reflected, to be prepared against the worst.

He felt averse to engaging any of the inhabitants about the place in the transaction, because he knew the smugglers to be a strong party, violently attached to each other, and doubted not that their resentment, however obscurely directed, would at some period or other fall upon any persons who had interrupted the proceedings of their comrades. The event of his consideration accordingly was, to make William M'Tavish, and an Irish lad, who was at present a servant in Mr. Nesbit's farm, but who was on the point of returning to his own country, his companions; and having taken care to be well provided with

with arms, it was about eight o'clock in the evening, when, thus attended, he rapped at the door of laird Christie's house.

After a time it was opened by the laird himself, attended by his servant-boy, bearing a lamp, and watched by the protecting eyes of the leddie, who was peeping into the passage from the parlour-door.

"Now, laird," cried George, "you have often asked me to give you a call, and I am come to accept your invitation; not yours indeed particularly, for I am come to have a crack with the leddie; I have brought a friend with me to entertain you; and that none of the household may be solitary, here is an honest young fellow, whom I will thank you to give a place to over your kitchen fire, along with your flunckie."

His speech appeared to create surprise, but it was cordially received, for it happened to be an evening when both the laird and the leddie were in good-humour; and

and matters were arranged as George had requested, by himself and his friend being immediately ushered into the parlour, and the Irishman into the kitchen.

When they were seated—"Ye choose a strange hour for yer walks, sirs," said Mr. Christie; "but we're no the less glad to see ye.—Guidwife, what are ye about? bring ben the family Bible."

The guidwife obeyed; but to the infinite merriment of George, the volume proved to be of glass, the size a gallon, and the contents whiskey. There are a great many of these family Bibles in the Highlands; but to the credit of its inhabitants be it said and known, that there is scarcely an instance amongst them of a being who does not, at every becoming season, drink also with reverence of the true volume of salvation.

George was too well acquainted with human nature not to be aware that an abrupt disclosure of the cause of his visit would throw persons like his present host

and

and hostess, unaccustomed to the extraordinaries of life, into a state of perturbation, which might even prove inimical to their own safety; and that (as an author would say) the proper way of telling a story is the means of making it effective to the minds of others. His first effort accordingly was to keep up the good-humour which at present prevailed.

"As it is my first visit," said George, "I am determined not to go away in a hurry; so what will you give us for supper?"

"A Highland house," replied Mrs. Christie, "is never wanting in ham and hospitality. But as if good luck had provided for your coming, I've as bonny a dou tart as ever ye set yer een on."

"An' ye see," said the laird, replenishing their glasses, "there's nae want of leaves to our family Bible."

At the moment the pigeon-pie was producing, George Sandiman heard the house clock strike nine; and whether he looked

grave

grave or not, he began to feel so, and considered it time to disclose the real purpose of his visit.

Truer words were never put upon paper than those which form a part of Mrs. Inchbald's preface to the play of "John Bull," respecting the delight with which a British audience witness a gift upon the stage; the author of these pages has perhaps had an opportunity of proving that truism much more frequently than she has, and met with occasions to convince him, that out of the millions who have applauded, to the very echo, Job Thornberry's ten-pound gift, not one in a thousand would, in a similar situation, have given tenpence to relieve a much more deserving object than a capricious and runaway son. Not has the same sound understanding, in her remarks on a comedy, of which I cannot immediately charge myself with the name, but where one of the characters, with attic wit, contrives to spell Philip with an F, in coincidence with my remarks, alludes

to

to the numerous beggars in our streets, with something like a hint, that our national generosity likes better to be seen on a subscription list, than to distribute manna in the dark alleys of necessity.

But my readers are exclaiming, that this is irrelevant to the subject of my tale; I beg their pardon—it is the preface to an apology which I am about to offer them for a disappointment which, I apprehend, they are going to experience; for if they are as fond of bargain-making in the closet, as they are of gifts upon the stage, they will indubitably be disappointed, when I merely inform them that the laird and the leddie subscribed with gratitude to every condition offered to them for their preservation by George Sandiman; that the villains, whose conversation he had overheard in the morning at the public-house by the waterside, made their premeditated attack upon the laird's family; that he who had spoken in the Scottish dialect was shot by the young Irishman

Irishman as he entered the house; and that the other was secured and disarmed by Sandiman.

CHAPTER VIII.

No sooner had Sandiman secured his prisoner, than the man exclaimed — "Oh, sir—Mr. Sandiman! don't you know me?"

"I don't know," replied Sandiman, "I don't know. On examining your features, a strange and unaccountable sensation, which I cannot define, comes to my mind —who are you?"

"I know you very well, I am certain," replied the offender; "I am sure your name is Sandiman. Don't you remember an officer whom you once challenged, during the Musselburgh races, at the assembly-rooms in St. George's-street, in Edinburgh?"

"Lieutenant Malford of the artillery!" returned George: "surely you cannot be that man—and yet—I think—I believe you are indeed—But to behold an officer of the British army in this situation——"

"An officer," answered Malford, "is not more exempt from misfortune than another man. I have experienced such trials in my life as only Heaven and myself are acquainted with. Oh, Mr. Sandiman! if you knew what it was to stand in terror of the eye of the law——"

He paused—Sandiman did comprehend the sensation to which he alluded, and began to feel pity for the object before him—pity for which the stern voice of justice would have deemed him culpable.

Sandiman did not speak; Malford profited by his silence for continuing—"Mr. Sandiman, if you would but condescend to hear my wretched story, and that I might believe that by its recital I could move your heart to commiseration—that you would intercede for me with those

whom

whom the God above is my witness that I intended only to have robbed of a small sum, to redeem me from the dreadful line of life in which I have lately lived, and restore me to the happy circumstances that now await me. To express my gratitude would be impossible—it can only be estimated by those who experience my present misery."

Sandiman still continued silent.

"Which of us," continued Malford, "has not, in the course of our existence, deviated from the path which we ought to pursue? Who, in the general consideration of society, is the good, the worthy, and the virtuous man? he who has never known those trials which overthrow the fairest resolutions of the mind, and by their acrimony strike at the root of principle. I am one of those wretched beings —in God's name, hear me!"

Sandiman's heart was moved to pity; he did consent to hear what Malford had to urge in his defence; and by the permission

of Mr. Christie they retired to a private apartment.

"I am a natural son," Malford began by saying, "and never knew my father. After having experienced all those buffets, those whips and stings of contumely which are dealt out by the world to such as lack their natural protectors, I was placed in an inferior situation of the army, through the interest, as I understood, of some friends who knew me, although I was never permitted to know them, and at the same time made acquainted, that it was the last service I was ever to receive at their hands.

"The youth who is at an early age left to be the guide of his own conduct, who has no director of his actions, no controller of his passions, should, for his own security, possess the stability of at least a man of forty, to be enabled to protect himself against the temptations and the snares of the world. My feelings were like those of the majority of mankind—liable to false impressions;

impressions: the army is by no means a school which teaches its disciples steadiness of conduct; and I became a votary of pleasures which my means were insufficient to support, and which, under the false title of enjoyment, kept my mind at constant variance with itself.

"It is unimportant to the point to which I particularly wish to direct your attention, that I should recount any of those scenes of my life which are unconnected with that one material event upon which I hope to awaken your pity. About a year after our dispute in Edinburgh, I became acquainted with a young woman of a most amiable temper and engaging manners; she was an orphan, living in retirement, on a very slender annuity, and acquainted only with the fair side of humanity. I considered that in a connexion with such a woman I might reclaim myself from all my past errors, and taste a new happiness in domestic comfort. I applied myself strenuously to engage her

 affections;

affections; I succeeded, and led her to the altar.

" We all naturally endeavour to plead an excuse for the vice which has been the rock of our destruction; but I truly believe that every evil propensity may be more easily conquered than a gamester's lust; the passion once admitted to the heart, lurks in the blood, and so strongly incorporates itself with the system, that the venom can only be expunged with the life. From these few words you may gather, that as a husband I became, in every instance, a reformed man, with the exception of play.

" About the time that my wife was expected to give birth to our first infant, I was sent from Newhaven, where I had before been stationed, upon the recruiting service, and not deeming it safe for her to travel, I left her in the lodging we had inhabited in Leith.

" It is one of the cruelties of our nature, at least one of the trials which Providence has

has ordained us to struggle with, that an instant decides the fate of man. Oh, Mr. Sandiman, were it possible that action could be as slow as the recollection which succeeds it, how many a wretch would have been spared the pangs which I have endured!

"In the town where I was quartered, cards were the favourite amusement of the inhabitants; I had before needed no spur to my disposition for play, but this proved a fresh stimulus to my natural inclination, and drove me to the verge of a precipice, by making me the loser of a sum which it was impossible for me ever to solve. The man who had won it of me professed to be my friend, and proposed that the obligation should be cancelled by my marrying his daughter. I did marry her, and became a second time a husband. I have too good an opinion of your sense, Mr. Sandiman, to suppose that you will ask me why I did so. The idiot asks why it rains? It is a part of that dispen-

sation over which the veil of obscurity is at present drawn; it is a secret as impenetrable as unlimited. If we could answer *why* we did as we have done, the question would be irrelevant; for if we had taken sufficient reflection to be prepared for the *why*, the deed itself would never have been committed.

"Well, sir, true it is indeed that if men's evil deeds are not written in brass, their vices are sounded with a brazen trump; my misfortune, or my crime, call it which you please, for it was both to me, was soon blazoned to the world, and to avoid the retributive hand of justice, I was compelled to fly society. Distracted in my ideas, I took my way to Greenock, intending to enter into the service of the sea. Whilst sitting in a mean public-house, overwhelmed with grief, and almost unconscious of existence, I was aroused from my lethargy of thought by a voice addressing me by my own name. I raised my eyes to the speaker, and recognised

nised in his countenance a deserter from the regiment to which I had belonged. He informed me, that since his desertion he had been one of a gang of smugglers who resided near Loch Lomond. I in return acquainted him with my unhappy case, and at his invitation joined the band. He was the man to whose existence one of your companions this night put a period.

"I am now come to that part of my short history which explains the disgraceful transaction that has made me your prisoner. In my regiment was a corporal, a man who, when in the ranks, had been my servant, whom I had found confidential, and with whom, on my quitting society, I entered into a compact that he should take every opportunity of giving me information respecting the two unfortunate beings who called me husband.

"My first wife I loved, I adored; for my second I only sorrowed that destiny had united her fate with mine; she had

not the same influence over my feelings, nor did I appear to receive from her that affection which is bestowed on the object of her choice by the woman who really loves.

"About a week ago I received a letter from my confidant, informing me that my second wife was dead. It was now, of course, at my option to return to the world, and I immediately resolved to do so, and anticipated with an almost-inexpressible joy my reunion with her who possessed my heart. But I had not the means of returning to her with a creditable appearance; my association with the smugglers had only produced me the necessaries of life, and my soul recoiled at the idea of entering Edinburgh, where my wife was residing, and consequently appearing at the lodgings which she was inhabiting, in the mean attire in which you now see me.

"I imparted my feelings to him who

is now no more, and he devised the plan for relieving my necessities which has caused the termination of his own existence, and added an additional guilt to mine. Here, sir, concludes my wretched tale; and as the only proof that I can produce to you of its validity, do me the favour to read the letter sent to me by my corporal with the intelligence of my second wife's death."

Whilst speaking, he took the letter from his pocket, and placed it in Sandiman's hand; the contents were these:—

"SIR,

"Last Thursday, which is the market-day at Dalkeith, I was sent to that town with a small party of our men to recruit. In the course of the afternoon, I saw a funeral going to the churchyard, and inquiring whose it was, was informed that it was Mrs. Malford's, the sister of Mr. Lewison, the shoemaker; I considered

it my duty to lose no time in giving you this information, and remain, sir,

"Yours to command,

"JOHN FRAZER."

The paper fell from the hands of Sandiman. An emotion, dreadful to the eyes of his companion, took possession of his features. "Villain, rascal, scoundrel!" ejaculated George, "there is not a name bad enough to call thee by, if Beatrice Lewison was thy victim!"

In astonishment Malford confessed the truth, and a few sentences explained the situation in which they stood to each other.

"I know my doom then," said Malford; "all my hopes of mercy are at an end; let my fate proceed—treat me as the criminal I am!"

"No, sir," replied Sandiman; "I will treat you as becomes the respect I feel for the memory of Beatrice Lewison; I will not

not indict as a criminal the man who has had the honour of calling her wife. However you have disgraced your commission, you have been an officer; that title includes the gentleman, and as such, for her sake, I will meet you on equal terms. My pistols are ready at hand—you cannot mistake me, and you shall have your choice."

Malford could offer no objection to the terms proposed, and it was determined that as Malford had no friend near, they should both be unattended by seconds. The day was already beginning to dawn; Sandiman dismissed the Irish lad; and calling M'Tavish into the apartment, informed him of what had passed.

William fell on his knees, and clasped the hands of Sandiman in his—"Oh my friend, my father! my every thing upon this earth! oh do not, do not expose yourself to the possibility of committing murder! if this man is guilty, as indeed we know he is, surrender him to the punishment of the law; do not stain your own hands

hands with blood. Oh, George, dear George! save your soul alive to meet the Lord without trembling at the last day! Think of your Bible; does it not tell you that God made man in his own image? and can you, would you, dare to direct a weapon of death at the image of your Maker?"

"My purpose is fixed," cried Sandiman, "and by the eternal God, you shall not shake me from it!"

"Permit me, young man," said Malford, addressing William, "to speak a few words to you; perhaps they are almost my last on earth. I have heard that you are an Edinburgh man; you will likely soon return thither; I have there a wife whom I love—no matter how dearly: but it would be a satisfaction to me in death for her to be made acquainted that I died in the same affection for her in which I lived; and should I fall in the encounter which is about to take place, indulge a dying man by informing her of my

my fate; and as a pledge that you are indeed the messenger of him whom she loved, bear her this token, the first gift of her affection for me."

He took a handsome silver watch from his pocket, and putting it into William's hand, said—"Mrs. Malford lives in Leithwynd; if she is not immediately found by that appellation, her maiden name will in that neighbourhood quickly discover her to you; ask for Jannet Smith."

"It is my Jannet! It is my Jannet! It is my own poor Jannet Smith!" exclaimed William, and fell half-senseless into the arms of Sandiman.

George took advantage of his temporary estrangement from thought, and bore him into the apartment where the laird and his wife were seated, and entreating them to take care of his friend, as he had something of importance to discuss with the prisoner, he took the opportunity to quit the house with Malford, unobserved by William.

In the course of a few minutes the tears which

which had streamed from the eyes of William had relieved his heart, and starting hastily up, he asked for his friend. "He is gone away with the prisoner," was the answer.

"George! George! George!" exclaimed William, without intermission, and rushed out of the house, in spite of every effort to retain him within it.

CHAPTER IX.

WILLIAM ran along the road leading to Mr. Nesbit's farm; he had not proceeded far when the report of a pistol struck his ear. With a palpitating heart he turned his eyes to the direction from which the sound had proceeded, and in a few seconds perceived George Sandiman to rise from a sand-pit by the side of the road.

They flew to meet each other.—"Malford is dead," said George.

"Oh George, my friend, my life! how could you bring your mind to commit murder?"

"It was not murder," replied George; "we met upon equal terms, and the laws of honour authorize all that has passed between us."

"But honesty and the word of God cannot

cannot authorize it," replied William; "oh George, George! you are a lost man."

George affected sternness, and replied—"Nonsense! my heart justifies the action of my hand; but I must leave this part of the country; for as we had no seconds, and consequently no evidence of our conduct, if I remain here, I shall be accused of murder, and arrested to answer the accusation."

"I heard the report of only one pistol," said William.

"No, no, his missed fire," replied George; "and that circumstance in a court of justice would strengthen the suspicion of my having treated him dishonourably—a reflection which impels me to move from hence immediately." He fixed his piercing and animated eye on William, and proceeded speaking thus—"William, I adventured life and reputation for him who was most dear to you; will you, at this instant, at this most critical moment of my existence, desert me?"

The

The tender heart of William dissolved itself in tears—"George," he said, "the spirit of my honoured father rises to my view, and makes me yours, and yours *only*; do with me as you will."

George pressed him to his bosom, and in a tone of voice which shewed the natural buoyancy of his spirits to be reviving, he said—"Yes, Malford is dead, and I have revenged my dear Beatrice!"

"Oh, George," said William, "I hope, if you escape the retributive hand of justice in the present instance, you will devote the remainder of your days to making your peace with Heaven."

"I have never omitted to say my prayers morning and evening for the last ten years," said George.

"But if your actions through the day contradict your prayers," said William.

"Pshaw!" cried George, "drop the subject just now, I beg of you."

"How I bless my God that I am more innocent than him I call my friend!" reflected

flected William, and devoted himself to act under the guidance of the pretendedly happy, but truly soul-wrung Sandiman.

They reached Greenock, William submitting himself in every respect to the will of his friend. It was evening when they arrived there.—"I wonder whether we are too late for the last coach to Paisley," said Sandiman; "go and ask what it is o'clock."

"I can tell you," replied William; "you know I have Malford's watch; it is ten minutes past seven. Oh, George! how shall I ever be able to deliver up this charge to Jannet Smith? To be sure I never spoke to her of love, but I thought—I thought that circumstances must have divulged my sentiments to her."

"Did you think you were wise enough to know a woman's inclination, or to trust to her fidelity, if you had known it?" ejaculated Sandiman: "William, you are a damned fool."

It was the first oath that William had ever

ever heard his friend utter with any degree of energy, and he said—"Why, George, you have ventured your life for a woman?"

"Yes, and I suppose I shall in the end be hanged for a woman," replied George; "and depend upon it, if ever it happens, I shall derive more pity from my own sex than theirs; for they are a set of devils, that think that too much can never be done for them."

"You are very harsh," replied William; "but I pity you, for you are rendered such by circumstances."

"You are a fool, I tell you again," rejoined George; "what service has your dear Jannet Smith ever rendered you? What affection has she ever shewn you, that you should be in this agitation about delivering her a watch that belonged to another fellow, whom she liked better than you?"

"I never told her that I loved her," replied

plied William, "and therefore she cannot be blamed for having formed another connexion."

"Never told her!" echoed George; "the love that requires explanation is no love at all, in my opinion. Real love in silence estimates the feelings of the heart which inspires and returns the passion; but I am chafed by misfortune, very ill to please just now, and as likely to curse you, whom I love best of all created beings, as to bless you: so drop the subject; don't talk—hold your tongue."

They proceeded from Greenock to Glasgow, and from thence to Edinburgh. "Oh Heaven!" exclaimed William, "am I once more in that city where——"

"And am I," ejaculated George, with an unusual degree of agitation, "in that city where—you know what I mean, William—if they catch me at all, it will save them and me a deal of trouble, by trying me for two offences at once."

They

They had taken up their abode at an inn in Nicholson-street.—"Don't you think," said William, "that we should be less liable to requisition in a retired village?"

"By no means," said George; "populous places are always most eligible for security."

But, alas! his axiom proved vain; he was arrested for the murder of Malford, and William was likewise detained a prisoner. "I confess myself guilty in the eyes of the law," said Sandiman, "though my conscience acquits me; but why is my friend detained?"

"Is not the property of the deceased found on his person?" said the officer.

"Oh," exclaimed William, "if this watch is the object which draws upon me the suspicion of guilt, hear me explain——"

But innocence cannot always dress its inculpability in those words which move the feelings of the law; and they were both

both examined, and committed as the murderers and despoilers of the late lieutenant Malford.

CHAPTER X.

THEY were tried and condemned. There is no wall so thick through which a bribe will not penetrate. A few shillings, adroitly delivered to one of the gaolers, produced William the presence of Jannet Smith.—"Jannet," he exclaimed, "perhaps you don't remember me. You never loved me; but, bad as ever you may have been, I cannot reprove you: but oh, Jannet, why was that officer your husband? Why was not William M'Tavish your husband?"

"William," replied Jannet, "I can scarcely speak; my tongue is tied wi' misery. Oh, William, William! when I was in London wi' my puir mither that's lang

lang syne deed an gane, gin gid spoke a word o' kindness to me then, and only said, Jannet Smith, will ye be mine? I would hae said, that I will, William, wi' heart and soul, for ever and ever, and then, William, how happy we twa micht hae been!"

"I never had but one positive wish upon earth, Jannet; it was to see you a happy woman, and——"

"William," replied Jannet, "my whole soul is yours—it is your soul. If judgment were passed upon me at this moment, I die and live for you only."

"Jannet," said William, endeavouring to command composure of voice, "why did you marry Malford?"

"Oh, my William! for I will say mine, for you were mine at the first formation o' our young ideas, had ye seen the tears that accompanied me to the altar—the wretchedness that shook my frame, when, at the entreaties o' my dying mother, Malford took me to his marriage bed. But

here, in the heart o' a prison, where the eye of God penetrates, but may not, from its omniscience, see occasion to relieve—here will I confess, that if Malford was my husband, my dear William was the possessor o' my heart."

"You should have considered that, my dear Jannet, before you formed a connexion with Malford."

"William," returned Jannet, "Heaven bless you, William! Perhaps the kiss that I now place on your cheek is an indignity to your character; but oh, pardon me! for you know what my feelings are at the moment."

"I ever did love you, and do love you above all the rest of the world; but when my poor father was——why did you turn from me as you did at that moment?"

"Turn from you! I would have died for ye; but I could nae bear to tell you that yer faither was in the power o' the hangman."

A short and emphatic silence ensued—

"Hark!"

" Hark!" said Jannet; " my love, my William, dinna ye ken for what that bell is? Ye ken that yer fated, yer condemned! The hour is come whan ye maun pay the debt that nature requires o' ye!"

William listened; he heard the passing bell—" It is indeed tolling," he said.

" And God Almighty send it may be yer passport to heaven!" cried Jannet.

The cells of the prisoners were separate—" Where is George? let me see my dear George," said William; " let me behold him once more before our eternal separation. I entreat to see George Sandiman."

A long, a dreadful silence prevailed. Jannet was not called upon to quit the prison, and the universal stillness which reigned exacted from those who witnessed it a degree of astonishment and terror which they were unable to define.

At length a gaoler entering the place,

said—" Weel, Mister Sandiman is awa to his lang haim."

William uttered a loud shriek, and exclaimed—" What! is my dear George dead?"

" Yes," returned the man; " the folks say that ye ought to hae shared his fate; but that's nae business o' mine; and as to you, madam," addressing Jannet, " march off, gin ye please; we dinna countenance ony dragtails here; so walk yer body aff as soon as ye please."

William sunk on the floor—" Jannet," he said, " we are dead alive; they can injure us no farther. Heaven bless you! and may you never behold another wretch like William M'Tavish!"

Jannet was hurried out of the prison, and William sunk upon his bed of straw, reflecting only on the fate of his revered friend George. It was dark night; no ray of comfort beamed upon the prison; he lay restless on his unrefreshing bed.

The

The door of his prison creaked upon its hinges; a faint and glimmering light called him to a sense of existence; he raised his eyes at the sound, and beheld—judge the feelings of William when he beheld —his father.

"Author of my being, can you be alive, and witnessing me at this instant!" exclaimed William.

The eyes of Archibald M'Tavish, for Archibald M'Tavish indeed it was who now contemplated his disconsolate son, flashed with an emotion dreadful yet consolatory to the feelings of him to whom it was directed.

"Are you," said Archibald, "the prisoner wha should hae been hanged this day, but got the reprieve?"

"And are you," replied William, "my father, and alive? Oh! by what means was your preservation effected?"

His short story was, that Archibald, after the unsuccessful attempt of the executioner to deprive him of that existence

which the law had condemned him to forfeit, had been pardoned, on the condition of his consenting to become the future executioner of the city.

George Sandiman had died by the hand of him whose life he had preserved. Farewell, George! may thy deeds be registered in that book over which the recording angel drops the tear of sensibility; and oh, Jannet! may thy ignorance of life, and thy unacquaintance with the rules of society, furnish thee with a safe passport to those harbours where the shipwrecks of life never occur.

The sentence of William had been changed from death to transportation for life.—"At length then," said William, "my little fortune is of use; it will serve to transport my father and my dear Jannet into exile, as the companions of my misfortune. Cheer up, dear father! lose no time in informing Jannet of my intentions. I think Providence has yet happiness in store for us. It is the same God who

who made Britain and Botany Bay. No change of clime can remove us from his benign protection. Great God! thy will be done."

Read, read, ye sons and daughters of prosperity, who, if ye think at all, vainly think that the course of life was made for you to glide smoothly over at your will; for your own sakes correct your ideas, and blaspheme not your Maker, by daring to suppose that an unerring God can have prejudice for his creatures. If you are more blessed than those against whom the worldly scale of human felicity preponderates, think not that ye are the greatest favourites of the Divinity; but judge humbly that he estimates you unworthy of the trials which assail those whom you consider your inferiors in beatitude. Every tear shed by the heart which is worthy, but unfortunate, will be a gem in the perpetual crown which is promised hereafter, and every benefit permitted to the indolent and unacknowledging nurslings of

terrestrial ease, a scorpion in their hearts beyond the grave.

TALE

Tale the Second.

THE

WIFE, THE MISTRESS, AND THE FRIEND.

A TALE OF MYSTERY.

Neither man nor angel can discern hypocrisy. *Milton.*

TO THE READER.

Of the subsequent tale, the author can only say, as of the foregoing one, that it is founded upon absolute fact; and that he is certain that there are numbers in existence who can testify his assertion.

THE

Wife, the Mistress, and the Friend.

CHAPTER I.

AMELIA Woodville was beloved by man, woman, and child, and we may venture to assert that she was also beloved by Heaven, for whom the Lord loveth the Lord chasteneth, and severe were the earthly trials experienced by Amelia Woodville. Amelia was the motherless daughter of a father who idolized her as his only child; she was amiable and accomplished; she was beautiful without being conscious that she possessed charms, and elegant without studying

studying to appear so. Her father supported a superior establishment, and was well known to be possessed of a handsome property, which must indivisibly devolve upon her at his death; and thus advantageously gifted by nature and by fortune, at an early age numerous were the suppliants for her hand.

The compact which existed between Amelia and her father was, that she should never marry in opposition to his will, and that he in return would never compel her into matrimony contrary to her inclination. Amelia had attained her twentieth year, unmoved by the shafts of love, or the entreaties of lovers, when that blind fate which is universally allowed to be the director of marriage, introduced to her acquaintance a gentleman her equal alike in situation, in person, and in the advantages which result from education, and an habitual intercourse with refined society. The heart of Amelia Woodville was, for the first time, captivated, and with the

decided

decided approbation of her father, she became the wife of Augustus Dorrilon.

Four years glided on in uninterrupted happiness; they became the parents of three lovely infants, and every additional tie appeared to strengthen their affection. In compliance with the wishes of Mr. Woodville, who had felt himself unwilling to be deprived of his daughter's society, and who resided in the country, Mr. Dorrilon had purchased a mansion for their residence at a short distance from his; and as they were surrounded by few neighbours, they received few visitors, and resigned themselves to the luxury of domestic enjoyments.

From their children proceeded their first pleasures; their secondary amusements arose from a cultivation of the arts. Amelia was a proficient in music; Augustus excelled in the use of the pencil; and considerable delight arose to them from being reciprocally the pupils of each other in those two sciences.

The

The fifth year of their marriage produced to them the first diminution of their bliss in the death of Mr. Woodville. Amelia regretted him as an affectionate parent, and Augustus as the being next to himself most intimately attached to his wife.

Time passed on unmarked by any event, till Dorrilon's eldest child, who was a boy, had completed his fifth year. Dorrilon had himself, from his infancy, been reared in public seminaries, and was averse to private tuition; he accordingly wished to remove to some spot where his children might enjoy the benefit of attending public schools.

In the heart of Amelia the advantage of her children, and the inclination of her husband, were the two predominant feelings, and their union immediately induced her to consent to his wishes. She undoubtedly experienced a reluctance to quit those scenes of mild enjoyment and contentment where she had received the first proofs

proofs of her husband's affection, and given birth to her children; but the motives already described outweighed every selfish consideration; and their abode, in the course of a few months, was consequently fixed in one of the principal cities of England.

The customs of society, and their wish of eventually introducing their children, well aequainted, into life, induced them, in their new situation, to relinquish their former plan of retirement. Amelia now had her morning levees and her evening drawing-rooms; Augustus frequented the clubs and the billiard-tables; but still they continued eminently happy. Nay, they even considered that their occasional intercourse with the world made them return with zest to the hours which they passed in solitude, and that they derived more enjoyment from an exchange of their their own opinions, now enabled to enliven or strengthen them by a comparison with those of their associates.

Amongst

Amongst the numerous acquaintance to whom their present residence had introduced them, was a Miss Gertrude Lambton, a young lady of between twenty-seven and thirty years of age. She was undoubtedly handsome; but her beauty was of that ruddy and unrefined kind, which formed the same contrast to the delicate loveliness of Mrs. Dorrilon which the full-blown rose does to the half-expanding bud. Her figure was good, but it was too much *en-bon-point* for her age and height. To a stranger her manners appeared masculine and repulsive; but to those few whom she selected as her favourites, she was said to be capable of displaying both suavity and benevolence of disposition.

From the first hour of her introduction to Mrs. Dorrilon, she evinced a marked partiality for her society, which Mrs. Dorrilon was, for a considerable time, cold in receiving or returning, for prejudiced by the general tenor of her words and actions, which were, to the multitude, the very

very opposite of conciliating, she learnt only by degrees to perceive that there were qualities of a superior nature resident in her heart.

The primitive coldness of Mrs. Dorrilon did not retard the unceasing attempts of Gertrude Lambton towards producing an intimacy. She called upon her almost daily; read to her from new publications, of which she had procured a transient loan for herself—brought her bouquets of the rarest exotics, a delicacy to which Mrs. Dorrilon was much attached—nursed and amused the two younger children, who were living at home—frequently visited the boy who was at boarding-school, with presents suited to his age; every action of which kind she invariably performed with the air of a person who is utterly unconscious of conferring an obligation.

Still Mrs. Dorrilon, although relaxing towards a warmer feeling for her new friend than that with which she had at first beheld her, did not feel herself completely

pletely at ease in her society. First impressions are very difficult to be erased; and she could not hastily dismiss from her mind that under which she had seen Miss Lambton at their first introduction to each other. She had no intimate friend in the place to resolve her doubts; and upon the characters which the world, most of all the fashionable world, attaches to an individual, she was aware that very little reliance could be placed. Some denominated her good-humoured, but headstrong and vulgar; some said that her conduct was assumed, from a love of eccentricity; some, that she had turned her brain with reading; some, that she was affected; some, haughty; some, sly; and the match-making Misses always lisped out in chorus, that if ever any woman was sure of dying an old maid, that Gertrude Lambton was.

From our inferiors, it is not unfrequently the case that we hear truths of ourselves and others, which we should never gather from

from our equals; and such was the case in the instance of Mrs. Dorrilon and Miss Lambton.

A heart possessed of the excellence of Amelia's could not be devoid of feeling for the necessities and sufferings of her fellow-beings; and it was often her custom personally to seek out objects of compassion, and to administer to their wants with her own hand. It so occurred, that about this time a case of distress was represented to her, in the person of an aged woman, who was lying dangerously ill, in a state of extreme poverty, and whose affliction was aggravated by her being the mother of a child, a girl of about fifteen years, who was nearly an idiot, and had likewise been a cripple from her birth, and whom she had been accustomed to support, jointly with herself, by her manual labour.

Mrs. Dorrilon immediately visited their humble dwelling, and found the account which had been given her of the distress

of

of its inmates to be just. She applied herself to the relief of their wants, and had the satisfaction of seeing her exertions in their cause rewarded, by the restoration of the old woman to her former ability of procuring subsistence to her child and herself by her industry.

One day, when Amelia was in conversation with the object of her bounty—"Oh dear, madam," ejaculated the latter, "I can never be thankful enough to you for what you have done for me and mine: Heaven, that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, sent you to me in the hour of my need."

"But you have doubtless experienced other friends besides myself during your illness," replied Mrs. Dorrilon.

"Yes—one, one other; and only one," answered the old woman; "just such another angel as yourself; she bought me the blankets now on my bed; but though I am sure it is in her will to be as bountiful as yourself, it is not in her power; she

is a young lady whose father has a large family, and therefore it cannot be supposed that her allowance of pocket-money can be great. But indeed she is a worthy soul—Heaven bless her, as well as yourself—sweet Miss Gertrude Lambton."

"Was it Miss Gertrude Lambton who relieved your necessities?" ejaculated Mrs. Dorrilon.

"Ay, indeed, madam, was it," replied the old woman; "and many a good time has she done so; Heaven bless her, again I say, for she truly deserves the reward of Providence."

The feelings of Mrs. Dorrilon at that moment underwent an immediate change; and she returned home, determined to cement the most cordial intimacy with Miss Gertrude Lambton.

They now rode together, walked together, conversed freely together, and very few days elapsed in which Gertrude did not join Mrs. Dorrilon and her husband at some one of their family meals.

Some

Some weeks after the cementing of this reciprocal intimacy, as they were one morning sitting at work together, their conversation happened to turn upon the duties of charity.—"You cannot oblige me more, my dear Gertrude," remarked Amelia, "than whenever you happen to be acquainted with any objects of necessity, and at the same time of worth, to point them out to me."

"How should I become acquainted with any such?" replied Gertrude, in her usual tone of blunt indifference. "I have no means of knowing them—and little to bestow on them, if I did know them."

"The more it redounds to your merit," returned Mrs. Dorrilon, "if you contrive to spare a part of that little for their relief."

"You will never hear of my doing that," ejaculated Miss Lambton.

"Pardon me," answered Amelia; "I have heard of it, and it raises you higher than I can express in my esteem;" and she

she then proceeded to relate her knowledge of Gertrude's benevolent conduct to the old woman.

"Stupid old fool!" sulkily muttered out Gertrude, "couldn't she have a few shillings given her, but she must make a story of it to all the world! She will never have to thank me again!"

"She thanks you heartily now," said Amelia.

"I don't want to be thanked for any thing of the kind," replied Miss Lambton; "what I do is to gratify myself."

In spite of Mrs. Dorrilon's attempts to continue the subject, Miss Lambton resolutely deviated from it, and her friend accordingly suffered it to drop.

Mrs. Dorrilon now clearly perceived, that instead of being haughty and affected, as some had named her, that Gertrude was too humble in spirit not to be hurt at any individual gaining the knowledge that she had been capable of rendering a service; and every moment raised her higher

in her admiration and good opinion; whilst to herself she found her uniformly blunt, but affectionate.

CHAPTER II.

Every hour of real life does not teem with incident like the pages of a romance, and again life passed on, for a considerable time, in an even course, with the characters of our tale, till Mrs. Dorrilon, with a feeling approaching to anxiety, observed that her husband's absences from home became gradually prolonged, and began to apprehend that a growing affection for play withheld him from his regular hours of returning. She was acquainted that he frequented several card societies in the place, and could conceive no other motive to which it was possible for her to ascribe his passing less of his time than he had formerly

formerly done with her and his children. If her suspicions were just, she did not surmise that he had at present ventured deeply; but she feared how far increasing habit might undermine principle and subvert judgment, both of which she knew him to possess.

To Gertrude, who had now obtained her entire confidence, Mrs. Dorrilon revealed her ideas.

"I cannot think it," returned Gertrude; "I cannot conceive him to be a gamester."

"Then what can detain him from his home so much more frequently than he was accustomed to quit it?"

"A love of company, I suppose," returned Gertrude, "and the exercise of man's prerogative, according to the proverb. Did you never hear the old saying," she added, with a husky laugh, "that women and cats were made to stay at home, and men and dogs to go abroad?"

"It was not always thus with him," said Amelia.

"Then he is more likely to be warm in the pursuit of his plan," returned Gertrude: "newly-acquired tastes are always pursued with avidity. But, for Heaven's sake! as you value your own peace of mind, dismiss these little anxieties from your thoughts. I have, of course, never been married; but I am well convinced, both from observation and reading, that the woman who once begins to vex herself about trifles in the conduct of her husband, lays up for herself a never-ceasing store of misery and torment. It is an evil which can only be effectually repulsed in its first advances towards the heart."

They were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who laid upon the table before his mistress a play-bill, announcing the performance of the succeeding evening, and withdrew.

"I hate

"I hate plays," ejaculated Gertrude; "a farrago of hackneied ideas and wire-drawn sentiments, strung together with the links of improbability."

Mrs. Dorrilon took up the bill, and exclaimed—"The tragedy of the Gamester is announced for to-morrow night; it would be an infinite relief to my feelings if we could induce Augustus to go with us to witness the performance. I am sure he will not refuse if we both ask him; he has a susceptible heart, and I doubt not that I could decide, from his observations on the play, whether or not my apprehensions are founded in truth."

"Oh no!" said Gertrude, again laughing, "what a Hamlet in petticoats!

'The play's the thing,
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.'

Well, I am sure, my dear, for the sake of any charitable indulgence of your feelings, I'll sacrifice my time, and join my humble prayers to yours for his attendance."

Their wish was accordingly made known to Dorrilon; and being readily acceded to by him, places were procured in the stage box; and at the hour of commencement they attended the theatre.

The play was sufficiently well performed to excite interest. Mrs. Dorrilon watched the countenance of her husband in silence. Gertrude sat on a back-seat of the box, reading a French romance. When Beverley staked the reversions of his uncle's fortune—"Cruel," fell from the lips of Mrs. Dorrilon, whilst her attentive eye was fixed on that of her husband. His were directed towards the scene; his nether lip was bent in contempt, and the ejaculation of—"Confound the rascal, he ought to be burnt!" was muttered between his teeth.

"But he is not so culpable as the false friend who has led him to his ruin," pronounced Amelia, her eye still rivetted on her husband.

"But with such a wife as his," returned Augustus,

Augustus, gazing upon her as he spoke, with an expression which appeared to be drawing a parallel between her character and that of Mrs. Beverley, "every friend should have been spurned for her happiness and satisfaction."

Mrs. Dorrilon replied not; but she could have fallen on her knees, and returned her thanks to Providence for the conviction which she believed herself to have received of her mistaking judgment.

On quitting the house, Miss Lambton declined supping with them, and begged that their carriage might be allowed to convey her home, as she had been all day oppressed with a headache, and the glare of the lamps in the theatre had increased it.

The next afternoon, when the friends met—"Augustus is innocent—I am sure he is," said his wife; "if he were guilty of the error of which I once accused him, he has not a mind sufficiently hardened to

cloak and defend it. He is no gamester. Oh, Heavens! how are my feelings relieved! Did you not observe, during the whole of the performance, how calm his countenance, at least how different to that of a man touched by the resemblance of corresponding situations?"

"I looked at him once or twice," replied Miss Lambton.

"And why did you not more pointedly observe him, my Horatio in petticoats?" asked Mrs. Dorrilon, smiling.

"Because, as I told you before, I knew there was no occasion," returned Miss Lambton.

"We never passed a happier evening, than after our return from the theatre last night," rejoined Amelia.

"Long may you continue to do so!" returned Gertrude.

"I am sure, my dear friend, you wish me happy," said Mrs. Dorrilon.

"And I am sure you know I would do any

any thing to make you so," answered Gertrude; and the subject was not at that period resumed.

A few weeks succeeded, during which the phantom of satisfaction which had been raised in the mind of Mrs. Dorrilon by her observations at the theatre, was again dissipated; three successive evenings did Augustus absent himself from his home, considerably later than he had ever done before; and on his return, the affectionate and dreading wife, whose heart had bled to behold him once more beneath her roof, believed that she could witness in him a coldness never before evinced towards her. She consoled herself during the night with the idea that some event might have either disturbed his temper, or be occupying his thoughts; but in the morning an additional pang was given to her feelings, for he appeared reflective and estranged; and she even thought, for what will not tender, doubting mothers think? that he kissed his little darling Amelia at

breakfast with less feeling than he had been accustomed to display towards her; still she resolved to bear her ideas in silence, and to assume a cheerfulness which was foreign to her heart. At times Dorrilon returned her gaiety and good-humour—at others he was thoughtful and negligent.

From the first of their marriage it had been the regular custom of Mr. Dorrilon, on the first day of every month, to place in the hands of his wife a certain sum of money, jointly for the expenditure of family concerns, and for her own use. About a fortnight after her last observations on his conduct, the day of payment arriving, he presented himself, according to his regular custom after breakfast in her dressing-room. It had heretofore been his invariable rule to lay the stated sum down before her upon her writing-desk, at which she was on this morning always engaged with her accounts, and then to retire, in order to give her leisure for pursuing

suing her occupation. On the present occasion he entered with his pocketbook, as usual, in his hand, but it was not, as usual, open. He drew a chair, and placing himself opposite to her, after some hesitation, spoke—"My dear Amelia, I have been lately reflecting whether it might not be possible to make some retrenchment in our establishment and expences."

"He has then been a loser at play," instantly whispered the sickening heart of Amelia; but she commanded fortitude to say—"Whatever you wish, Augustus, you are well aware that it ever has, and ever will be, my study to endeavour to accomplish. But I hope, I trust, that there is no pecuniary involvement pressing on you, which prompts you to this inquiry?"

"Oh no—none, none," replied Dorrilon; "I only mean that as our children increase in years, our expences must necessarily increase also; and that the re-

trenchment being gradual, will be the less felt by ourselves, and the less perceptible to the world."

"Sketch out the design which you wish me to pursue," replied his wife, "and I will immediately proceed to execute it."

"Try what you can do this month with twenty pounds less than you did the last; let that be the first experiment; and when we meet again upon the subject of expences this day month, we will discuss the point more fully," said Dorrilon.

He immediately rose and quitted the room, leaving Amelia convinced, as she recurred in imagination to the night of his witnessing the tragedy of the "Gamester," that a man may indeed perceive the errors of another, and still be blind to his own.

At her next meeting with Miss Lambton, the full heart of the sorrowing Amelia overflowed to her friend in a candid confession of all that had occurred.—

"How

"How resolute you were in your opinion," she said, "that Augustus was not a gamester! what can you now reply to the proof I have gained? You can only admit that the keenness of a wife's eye exceeds all other perceptions."

Gertrude smiled, but did not reply.

"Of all the errors which assail human nature with temptation," ejaculated Mrs. Dorrilon, "why has my Augustus fallen into the most irremediable? I could have borne any misery lightly, compared with that of knowing my husband to be a gamester."

Still Gertrude did not speak, but fixed her eye steadfastly on the countenance of her friend.

"I can read your feelings," said Mrs. Dorrilon; "you perceive the unhappiness of my case, and know not how to offer me consolation."

"You are mistaken," replied Gertrude, "utterly mistaken; I am still convinced that Dorrilon is not a gamester."

"What

"What else can it be that places him in pecuniary involvements?" exclaimed Mrs. Dorrilon.

"I am neither his purse-bearer nor the follower of his steps," answered Gertrude, settling her ring on her finger as she spoke.

"But you say that you are still convinced that he is not a gamester," rejoined Mrs. Dorrilon; "you must therefore have some knowledge of his conduct, which authorizes you to make that assertion."

"Shall I read a few more chapters of 'Waverley' to you this afternoon?" asked Miss Lambton, taking up the book as she spoke.

"No, no, no," emphatically pronounced Mrs. Dorrilon. "I beg of you not to turn aside from the subject which at this time engrosses my thoughts. You do know something of Dorrilon which is unknown to me."

Miss Lambton appeared busy in search-

ing

ing for the page at which her reading was to commence, and did not speak.

"Dear Gertrude, I entreat you to lay down the book, and attend to me," continued Amelia; "I beseech, I implore you, whatever you do know of Augustus, to confide it to me—I adjure you by the name of friend!"

"I might hazard the loss of that name by complying with your entreaty," replied Gertrude, replacing the book leisurely upon the table as she spoke.

"How can you imagine that?" asked Mrs. Dorrilon.

"Because," rejoined Miss Lambton, "I consider it a great inconsistency of character to divulge what it may cost a friend pain to hear."

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Dorrilon, "this suspense is more dreadful than a certainty of the worst of evils. Have mercy on me, and accede to my prayer."

"It would not be mercy, and I cannot be

be so unmerciful as to comply," was the answer.

"Gertrude!" pronounced Mrs. Dorrilon, rising, and taking the hands of her friend in hers, "you shall never quit me again till I have learnt this secret."

Gertrude spoke not.

"Have I not already told you," continued Amelia, "that it would be a relief to my feelings to know him any thing but a gamester?"

"Do not impose the task upon my lips," answered Gertrude; "it would be an eternal accusation to my heart to reflect that it had passed them. Have you no acquaintance but me—no confidential servant, of whom you can make the inquiry, and save me, your friend, from the self-reproach of having been the conveyer of any information that might affect your peace?"

"Acquaintance! servant!" echoed Mrs. Dorrilon; "is then his conduct, whatever that conduct may be, so publicly known, that

that the first person in any rank of life to whom I might apply myself for information on the point, could grant it to me? And oh, my Gertrude, would you submit me to the humiliation of seeking such information from any tongue but your own? Whatever his error, I am resolved to hide my knowledge of it both from him and from the world—to sooth his sorrows, if he has any, and to veil my own, if his conduct exposes me to experience them. On my knees——"

"No, no," returned Gertrude, "you shall not humble yourself thus to me; I almost wish that I had never known you; still more, never professed myself your friend. I did not then foresee that this was to happen."

"Oh, speak, speak!" ejaculated Mrs. Dorrilon; "you may now be more than my friend—my consoler, my adviser!"

"You melt my heart in despite of my reason," answered Miss Lambton: "sit down, my dear Amelia, endeavour to compose

pose yourself, and I will at least give you a hint, from which you may draw some conclusions. The most of what I can communicate I dare say you already know. You must be acquainted that he had an attachment before he married you?"

"No, no, I never did know it," returned Mrs. Dorrilon.

"It has perhaps escaped your memory," rejoined Miss Lambton; "you must have heard the name of Fanny Belson?"

"No, never," replied Mrs. Dorrilon; "for Heaven's sake proceed! keep me no longer on the rack."

By slow degrees Miss Lambton was won to relieve the feelings of her friend, and the account given by her of Fanny Belson was to this effect.—Fanny Belson, she said, had been a parish girl, in a small town at no considerable distance, where Augustus Dorrilon had resided with a relation on quitting the university; that he had gained an ascendancy over her principles, and afterwards deserted her; that

it

it was uncertain whether he had seen her since that time, till her arrival, about four months ago, in the city where they were residing; that on her first being observed, her appearance had been forlorn and destitute, but that it had quickly been changed to that of the most gay and fashionable; and that she was now situated in a milliner's shop, where Dorrilon was known to visit her.

When Miss Lambton ceased speaking, Mrs. Dorrilon maintained a strict silence; the blood had forsaken her cheeks and her lips, but her countenance retained its serenity, whilst her eyes, devoid of tears, were half-upraised towards heaven.

"Now," said Gertrude, "since I have made myself the instrument of indulging your curiosity, will your requital be to acquaint your husband that I have done so?"

"The friendship which I owe you would, at all events, withhold me from such a disclosure," replied Mrs. Dorrilon.

"But

"But pardon me, my friend; much as I owe to you, a superior consideration does, and ever will, tie my tongue. You once told me, that to vex myself for trifles in my husband's conduct, was to lay up for myself a store of misery and torment. I knew the truth of your assertion at the time you made it, and still perhaps had not sufficient authority over my own feelings to exert myself to that effect; but I am, notwithstanding, fully aware what must be the consequence of confessing those feelings, however aggravated, to him. The complaints of a suffering wife will never draw back the affections of an alienated husband; her importunities will never restore him to his home; alas! alas! it is only silent suffering, under the deceptive appearance of contentment, that may be able to operate in her favour upon his heart. We are parents, Gertrude; and if he is guilty, it becomes doubly my duty to abstain from the very shadow of error. I must now become, though not appearing

ing to be so, the joint protector of those who owe to us their being. Yes, yes, Gertrude, I told you, and I told you truly, that I could sooner endure the worst of truths, than the torture of suspense. Whatever the faults of Augustus Dorrilon, I will still be a wife, and doubly a mother."

"I have not been deceived in her whom I have chosen as my friend," emphatically ejaculated Gertrude; "at least her words pronounce that I have not; let me but behold her actions in concordance with them, and I shall hail her as the pattern of earthly virtue."

"Your approbation, thus warmly uttered, is indeed rare," said Mrs. Dorrilon.

"The case is rare," rejoined Gertrude; "at least I hope not very common; but your exemplary conduct under it is rarer still."

"Now my mind is once relieved—aggravated I suppose the world would call it,"

it," said Mrs. Dorrilon, "I beg that the subject may not, for a while at least, be revived between us."

"How blind is man to his own real happiness!" pronounced Gertrude; and they both sunk into reflective silence.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Dorrilon continued to receive her husband without any alteration of countenance, demeanour, or voice; and at times his conduct so much resembled that which he had displayed in the first season of his early love, that she almost doubted his inconstancy; but the assertions of a friend like Gertrude Lambton must, she considered, be the result of truth, especially when backed by the visible changes which at times took place in his manners; and more especially still, by her being acquainted that a doubtful character, of the name of Fanny Belson, was residing in the city, in the very capacity which Miss Lambton had mentioned.

One morning, when Mrs. Dorrilon was descending from her dressing-room to the breakfast-

breakfast-apartment, she saw her second son Charles in the hall, mounted on a beautiful rocking-horse.—"Who gave you this, Charles?" she inquired.

"Miss Lambton," answered the boy, "sent it to me this morning, just as I got up; how good she always is to us! is she not, mamma?"

Before mamma could reply, little Amelia, running forward, claimed her attention to a wax-doll, exclaiming—"And she sent this pretty baby to me; isn't she good Miss Lambton, as Charles calls her, mamma?"

Amelia kissed them both, but was unable to speak.

On entering the breakfast-apartment, and seating herself at the table, whilst awaiting the appearance of her husband, and she sat insensible to outer objects, till attracted by a delicious perfume, that greeted her senses, she cast her eyes around, and beheld the balcony of a window in the apartment, which had been thrown

thrown open to admit air, filled with numerous plants of a rare and beautiful nature, in full bloom.

Before she had time to inquire whence they came, a servant entering the apartment, said—" Miss Gertrude Lambton, ma'am, sent those plants to you this morning, with her compliments, and desired you to be informed that she will call upon you about noon."

The kindness of Gertrude affected the heart of Mrs. Dorrilon almost as greatly as the unkindness of her husband.

With the hour of noon arrived Miss Lambton, agreeably to her appointment. By chance Mrs. Dorrilon met her in the hall.—" My dear friend," she said, " why have you done this?" pointing, as she spoke, first to the rocking-horse, and thence to the plants in the window, as she led her by the hand into the breakfast apartment.

" Can any thing which a friend who knows your heart is able to do for you be

too much?" ejaculated Gertrude. "They are trifles, mere trifles—I am ashamed to offer them; but trifles sometimes act as alleviations, at least for the moment; and a moment's pleasure, you know," she added, smiling as she spoke, "as some author expresses it, 'is worth an age of pain;" and with these words, pressing the hand of Mrs. Dorrilon, she ran and caught little Amelia in her arms, and began to sing nursery songs to her and her doll.

Mrs Dorrilon suffered a few minutes to elapse, then said—"Pardon me, Gertrude, we are friends, with whom no ceremony should or can exist; your friendship I esteem beyond every consideration in life; but I will not allow you to debar yourself, in order to furnish little gratifications to me and my children: I value them because they are your gifts; I value the motive still more; but, in the name of friendship, I interdict a repetition of this conduct."

"You know I will do as I please, so say no more about it," answered Gertrude, with

with one of her husky laughs. "I will stay and dine with you to-day, and you will have another visitor besides."

"Who is that?" asked Amelia.

"Your son George," replied Miss Lambton; "I am intimate with his master, and I have been and solicited a holiday for him, and expect to see him here every minute; I thought it might be a gratification to you to have him with you a few hours."

"Oh, how kind, how considerate!" Mrs. Dorrilon was beginning to say, when George ran skipping into the room.

"Oh, mamma," he said, "only think, I have got a whole holiday; and who do you think it was procured it for me? dear Miss Gertrude Lambton; and she made me a present of this beautiful gold watch into the bargain," producing one from his fob as he spoke.

"Gertrude, Gertrude, this must not, shall not be!" said Mrs. Dorrilon.

"If you are going to quarrel with me,"

 replied

replied Miss Lambton, "I will go home to dinner myself, and take George back to his school."

"We will discuss the point at another opportunity then," rejoined Mrs. Dorrilon.

"It will be a distant one," returned Gertrude; and the present moments were given to transient happiness by the fond mother and her children.

Shortly arrived the first day of the month, on the morning of which Dorrilon, as usual, appeared in the dressing-room of his wife.

Struggling to assume a cheerfulness of countenance, Amelia said—"I am happy to inform you, Augustus, that I am this month sixteen pounds your debtor, and hope, by judicious retrenchments, to be more so when we meet again upon this subject. I find that my children now engage so much of my time and attention, that I shall be happy to withdraw myself, in a great measure, from society; and in

that

that case, you know, my waiting-woman will be entirely superfluous, which will at least reduce our family to one individual less."

Her words appeared to affect him; he bent down his head, and pretended to polish the top of his boot with the sleeve of his coat. In a few moments, with a half-averted countenance, he said—"Far be it from me, Amelia, to deprive you of any comfort which my means or ability can render you; I wish to see you beloved—delight in seeing you surrounded by friends——"

"One true friend," said Amelia, endeavouring to be playful, "is as much as any mortal has a right to expect; and the name, without the reality, is like a child's rattle, an unmeaning toy, worth nothing but the sound."

"But a false friend——" said Dorrilon.

"Is still worse," replied Amelia; "it is the latent poison that lulls to sleep the

senses, and then robs the temple of honour of its treasure."

Dorrilon rose; he caught her hand, and pressing it in his, said—"You are a temple of beauty, of virtue, of sensibility; beware that you are not robbed!"

Affection beamed in his eye—energy characterized his feelings; sensations indefinable assailed the heart of Amelia. Resolved to speak—"The casual topic appears to carry great weight to your feelings," she said.

"In as much as it concerns you, dear, dear Amelia!" he replied, "and no further."

Upon the words, "dear, dear Amelia!" Mrs. Dorrilon paused; was it possible that she was still his "dear, dear Amelia?" Her heart thrilled with a joy which her fears almost forbade her to cherish: at length she commanded a clear utterance, and begged him to explain himself.

"I am sure you cannot doubt that I love

love you," he replied; "but I do more than love you—I value you; you are an inestimable being, and deserve every tender consideration from those with whom you are connected. Promise me, then, as one to whom your happiness is most dear, to pursue the advice, to comply with the request which I am about to make of you. You may, and doubtless will consider it a very cruel request, especially as I shall assign no motive for advancing it, but that it is for your eventual good; still, I most earnestly entreat you to accede to it. Relinquish all acquaintance with Miss Gertrude Lambton."

Mrs. Dorrilon did not immediately reply.—"He can have no motive for this request," she considered, "but that of dreading that Gertrude should betray to me his secret." She looked at him inquiringly, and then said—"It is indeed a most unaccountable and severe task which you impose upon me; but when I took the name of wife, the vow of obedience, at

the same time, passed my lips, and it shall be adhered to; I will see Miss Lambton no more."

Augustus appeared delighted at her acquiescal, placed the same sum of money on the table before her, which he had left there on the preceding month, and parted from her in the most affectionate manner.

Amelia sat for some minutes buried in reflection; the more she considered the more she felt convinced that her husband could have no motive for his conduct, but his apprehension of Gertrude being impelled, by the more than common friendship which it was evident to the most careless eye that she bore her, to disclose to her his inconstancy.

She took a sheet of paper from her desk, and wrote the following letter:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"For as such I must, and ever will regard you, my mind is at this time

time in a state unfit for elaborate discussion; I can only state facts, and leave it to your own inestimable and penetrating heart to conceive my feelings, when I am compelled to say, farewell, for ever, to Gertrude Lambton! But such is the case; I am forbidden to converse with you again; that being to whose mandate I am, by the ties of religion, bound to bend, commands the sacrifice of friendship. Farewell, then, dear Gertrude! May every blessing, which you so well know how to bestow on others, attend yourself! And, oh! omit not sometimes to think of her who will never cease to reflect on you with gratitude and love!

"Your unalterable friend,

"AMELIA DORRILON."

The letter was sealed and sent; and, in the course of about a couple of hours, the following answer was returned:—

"AMELIA,

"You are a fool; you suffer yourself to be trampled upon by a brute, who mocks your faith and ridicules your humility. As you have so tamely yielded in this point, expect to find, that, in the course of a few weeks, yourself and your children will be commanded to quit the house of their husband and father, in order to make room for a more favoured mistress, at whom you may guess. Whatever befalls you, recollect that I have warned you, and remember that you still have a friend in

"GERTRUDE LAMBTON."

Amelia passed the evening alone, and a wretched evening it was. About the supper-hour Dorrilon joined her; he had dined out, and appeared flushed with wine—a state in which she had scarcely ever before beheld him.

He spoke not till the sandwich-tray was

was removed, and the servants had retired; then drawing his chair nearer to hers— "Amelia," he said, "I sincerely wish we had never quitted the country; we were, in my opinion, far happier there than we have been in this city; and I feel greatly inclined to return to it. We have, to confess the truth, lived too fast here, and it is necessary for us to make a change, which no plan can so well effect as that of retiring to a place where we are strangers. We are here at the distance of scarcely an hundred miles from Wales; I think I will go thither, and endeavour to find some pleasant spot of retirement, to which we may immediately proceed. Do you think you could be once more happy in seclusion?"

"Where you and my children are," replied Mrs. Dorrilon, "there is all the society which I covet."

Augustus did not reply, but pressed her affectionately to his breast; and she

thought she perceived a tear start into his eye as he did so.

"He has seen his error, and is reclaimed," reflected Amelia; and Amelia, that night, closed her eyes with a lighter heart than she had done for months before.

If it had actually been the case, as Amelia had surmised, that Dorrilon had indulged rather too freely with the bottle, on the preceding evening, he arose calm and collected on the following morning, and declared it his positive intention to proceed to Wales, in the course of a few days, in search of a new abode.

CHAP

CHAPTER IV.

AMONGST the circle of Mrs. Dorrilon's acquaintance were two single ladies, named Harrowby—an aunt of forty, and a niece of seventeen; the former stiff and scandalous, the latter silly and talkative. With females of this description, gossipping is the order of life; and one day, about this time, they both honoured Mrs. Dorrilon with a morning call.

After various other subjects had been discussed—"La, Mrs. Dorrilon!" exclaimed the niece, "is it true that you and Miss Gertrude Lambton have quarrelled?"

"We have not had a dissenting word," was the reply.

"Then, la!" returned Miss Lucy, "how vastly

vastly odd of you to break off, after being so uncommon intimate!"

Mrs. Dorrilon did not answer, and Lucy continued.

"Pray was it true, Mrs. Dorrilon, that she gave your children such a quantity of nice toys, and sent you such beautiful plants, and made George a present of a watch?"

"I have been indebted to Miss Gertrude Lambton for many acts of the kindest civility," returned Amelia.

"Well, that makes people think it so vastly odd that you never visit one another now," rejoined Miss Lucy.

"I never could have quarrelled with any body that had been so good to my children. I repeat," said Mrs. Dorrilon, "that we have not quarrelled."

"La! well, it is vastly odd, I declare," returned Miss Lucy; "to be sure, you know your own secrets best; but it's vastly odd."

A short silence ensued; Miss Lucy broke

broke it.—" La, Mrs. Dorrilon! did you never think it vastly odd where Miss Gertrude Lambton got the money to make presents and things with? Every body knows that the Miss Lambtons have only four-and-twenty pounds a-year a-piece to find themselves in clothes and coachhire. La! I am sure I should look a pretty sight if I had no more than that; shouldn't I, aunt?"

Another short silence ensued, which Miss Lucy again broke.—" La, Mrs. Dorrilon!" she said, " you are such a vastly good-tempered woman, that I dare say you often used to lend her a little money; did not you, Mrs. Dorrilon?"

" I never lent Miss Gertrude Lambton a shilling in my life," replied Mrs. Dorrilon, " nor ever knew her to be in want of pecuniary assistance."

" Well, it's vastly odd," rejoined Miss Lucy, " for every body thought you used to help her out a little, because you two were so intimate."

A third

A third silence took place. Miss Harrowby dissolved it with two or three sagacious hems, accompanied by two or three equally-sagacious nods of the head, and turns of the eye, directed at Mrs. Dorrilon, and then spoke thus—"You are a woman, ma'am, universally allowed to be equally prudent and virtuous, and, no doubt, the sad story in circulation relative to Miss Gertrude Lambton has resolved you to withdraw yourself from so unworthy an acquaintance."

Miss Lucy tittered; Mrs. Dorrilon looked surprised, and said—"I have heard no report to her prejudice."

"Bless me, indeed!" ejaculated Miss Harrowby; "I need not be afraid to speak, ma'am, for it's in every body's mouth; poor thing, I pity her, and still more do I pity her poor father, for he is a worthy man: what will he think when he hears of it? Indeed I sincerely hope he never will; but there are so many pretended friends in the world, who make a point of communicating

municating what they should withhold, that I fear it must come to his ears at last. Why, ma'am, it's confidently reported that Miss Gertrude Lambton has been repeatedly seen walking about the lanes and fields near the city, after dusk, in company with a sailor."

"No, aunt, not a sailor," exclaimed Miss Lucy, "a lieutenant in the navy."

"Nonsense, child," replied the aunt; "you know Mrs. Blowcoal told us only last night, that if he was any thing above a common sailor, he was only a midshipman at most."

"La, aunt! how can you talk so vastly odd?" cried Miss Lucy: "you know midshipmen are almost all quite boys; and every body allows this was a full-grown man, and a very tall one too."

"Well, ma'am," said Miss Harrowby, again directing herself to Mrs. Dorrilon, "be that as it may, it is certain that she was seen walking with a man, and arm-in-arm

arm too, in the places and at the time I describe to you."

"I cannot credit the report," said Amelia; "I believe Miss Gertrude Lambton to have too much virtue, as well as good sense and delicacy, to commit so flagrant an error."

"La! there now, I said you wouldn't believe it," ejaculated Miss Lucy. "Well, I must own it's vastly hard to have one's intimate friends turn out so queer."

The subject making no impression on Mrs. Dorrilon, was dropped.

"La, Mrs. Dorrilon!" again began the voluble Miss Lucy, "aint you going to see the fashions? To be sure, you know all the milliners show spring fashions today? They say Miss Belson has got the prettiest things in nature; but my aunt is so vastly odd, she wont let me go to her shop."

With another sagacious hem, and nod of the head—"I will never consent to the encouragement

encouragement of depraved characters," pronounced Miss Harrowby.

"Well, la now, Mrs. Dorrilon," resumed Miss Lucy, "isn't aunt too particular? They only say Miss Belson was once kept by an officer; nobody says any thing about her now; but aunt is so vastly starch and odd."

Mrs. Dorrilon simply remarked, that those were points upon which all individuals must act according to their own judgment; and her slow remarks, almost amounting to taciturnity, affording little entertainment to her visitors, they, to her no small satisfaction, took their leave, not quitting her without having left her ample matter for reflection; but a still wider field for the wanderings of the imagination was preparing for her.

The time had been appointed, without delay, at which Mr. Dorrilon was to set out for Wales, and it had been agreed that he was to travel on horseback, attended only by his groom. On the evening previous

vious to the day destined for his setting out, he returned home, as he generally did, about the supper-hour, but evidently intoxicated; he appeared, however, in the height of good-humour, and very shortly retired to rest. On the following morning, having dispatched an early breakfast, and being informed that his horse was at the door, he bade farewell to his wife, and taking up his hat from a sofa, on which he had thrown it on the preceding evening, he was leaving the apartment, when he suddenly discovered that his pocket-handkerchief and gloves, which he usually carried in his hat, were not within it. The room was searched, but they were no where to be found. Another pair of gloves were immediately purchased, and another handkerchief brought him; but he regretted the one which he had lost, for he was sometimes whimsical about trifles, and it had been of a peculiar pattern, to which he was attached.

It was an inviting May morning; and when

when Dorillon was gone, Amelia resolved to walk, and visit some of her pensioners, amongst whom was the old woman from whom she had first learnt the benevolence of Miss Gertrude Lambton's heart. On arriving at the cottage, she found the old woman sitting at her spinning-wheel, and upon her entrance, observed her to snatch something from the table, which she hastily thrust into a basket of yarn by her side. Rapid as was the action of the old woman, it was not so quick but that Amelia clearly discerned the pocket-handkerchief which her husband had lost, and also observed the fingers of a glove.

What could she conceive from so unaccountable a circumstance? She could only conclude that Dorrilon must have dropped them in the street, and the old woman have found them, and that being unwilling to be questioned how they had come into her possession, she had thus secreted them from observation. It was entirely

tirely contrary to the nature of Amelia to advance any inquiries upon a business of this kind; and after a very short stay at the cottage, she returned home.

CHAPTER V.

On the following day, whilst Mrs. Dorrilon sat at dinner with her children, a gentleman, who was an intimate friend of her husband's, was announced. She was somewhat surprised at the unusual hour of his visit, and still more so at the address with which he appeared before her.

"Excuse my abrupt entrance, Mrs. Dorrilon," he said, "but you have doubtless heard of the strange transaction which has occurred this morning; and as I know the timidity of ladies upon these occasions, I considered it my duty to be as prompt as

as possible, in the absence of my friend Augustus, in acquainting you that it does not in the least affect him."

"I am an utter stranger, sir," replied Mrs. Dorrilon, "to what you allude."

"Is it possible," returned Mr. Willmore, "that the story has not reached you? If such is the case, I wish I had been less abrupt in my endeavours to dissipate, as I believed, anxiety. The case, ma'am, is this:—A forgery has this morning been attempted to be committed upon the county bank, by means of a cheque for five hundred pounds, to which Mr. Dorrilon's name is attached; but the imposition was immediately discovered, and thus, fortunately, the demand was not answered. It is a most unaccountable story. The cheque was presented by a poor old woman, and its validity being suspected by the superior clerk, who has been in the constant habit of answering Mr. Dorrilon's drafts, she was detained and questioned. In reply to the inquiries made of her, she said—'That she had

had met a lady in the street, who had stopped her, and told her that she had some money to receive that morning at the bank; but disliking to go into the office amongst the clerks, she would give her a shilling to go for her, and wait her return at the corner of the square.' Persons were immediately sent to the corner of the square in quest of the lady, but none was to be found. The next step was to examine in whose favour the cheque was drawn, and it was found to be in that of a Miss Frances Belson, who, it seems, is a milliner, lately come to reside in town; and she and the old woman are now both before a magistrate, undergoing an examination."

From this conversation, upon which it must be needless to state the reflections of Mrs. Dorrilon, we pass to the apartment of the magistrate. The old woman was the first questioned. Her replies corresponded implicitly with those which she had made to the clerks in the bank; and

on

on being confronted with Miss Belson, and asked if she were the person from whom she received the cheque, she answered, that the transaction had been of so hurried a nature, that she had not had time to contemplate the features of the person by whom she had been addressed; but that if this were the lady, her dress was entirely changed.

Fanny Belson was next questioned. She replied with modesty, but with a degree of firmness, arising, as it appeared in the shape of self-preservation, from the unpleasant situation in which she was placed. She solemnly denied not only the handwriting not to be hers, but declared herself ignorant of all knowledge of the transaction. She confessed that she had formerly known Mr. Dorrilon when he resided with his aunt in the country; she had seen him since her residence in that city; but she believed him to have forgotten her, as he had twice passed her

in the street without turning his eye towards her; and these facts she felt certain, from what she knew of his general character as a man and a gentleman, that he would not disavow. She could also prove from her books and receipted bills, that in consequence of the recent death of a respected friend, from whom she had handsomely inherited, she was far removed from the necessity of resorting to crime for pecuniary assistance.

The assertions of the suspected weigh little in the breast of the law; and upon the strength of the presumptive proof which appeared against them, Fanny Belson and the old woman were both committed to take their trial at the ensuing assizes.

Mrs. Dorrilon felt extremely desirous of acquainting her husband with what was passing; but it was impossible for her to gratify her wish, for, in consequence of the wandering plan upon which he had set out

in

in quest of their new habitation, he had not left her any address by which she could write to him during his absence.

The attempted forgery was the sole topic which occupied the tongues of the city; and Mrs. Dorrilon, with some degree of surprise, heard that the old woman who was Fanny Belson's fellow-prisoner, and whose name was Martha Brown, was her old pensioner. Martha, however, Mrs. Dorrilon herself could hardly explain why, had fallen in her opinion since the circumstance of the gloves and the handkerchief, and her feelings were not so warmly excited towards her present unfortunate situation, as they would have been had her mind been divested of this recollection.

The ordinary of the city gaol, in which Fanny Belson and Martha Brown were confined, was the reverend George Lambton, the elder brother of the lady of that name, who has long since been introduced in these pages. He was a man of the most

conciliating and amiable disposition—he was a man who, in every sense of the word, was the friend of man. The living with which he was gifted was of so little value, as to afford a slender income even to a single man, and it was but very triflingly increased by the situation which we have just described him to hold; but still his purse, as well as his religious advice, were ever at the command of the needy; and although his meek and humble charitableness to mankind tied his tongue upon his true motives for filling the office in which he appears before us in this narrative, the real cause of his so doing was the opportunity which it granted him of soothing the heart of the sufferer with religious consolation, leading the sinner to repentance, and endeavouring to grant the soul of the criminal an alleviation in its passport to futurity.

Frequent were the visits of the reverend Mr. Lambton to Fanny Belson; he conjured her, if she had been guilty, to confess

confess the crime of which she stood accused. He did not flatter her with any falsely-raised hopes of pardon; he, on the contrary, represented to her, that no indulgence could be expected to be shewn to one who had been guilty of a forgery: he only urged her, for the sake of her eventual bliss, to make a candid avowal of the truth, and by abjuring falsehood, and acknowledging her error, to die in peace with her Creator.

Fanny received his admonitions with gratitude, but in the most solemn manner persisted in her innocence of the crime imputed to her. In the course of their various conversations, she laid before him a short sketch of her life. She confessed the intimacy which had once subsisted between herself and Mr. Dorrilon; subsequently to which, she acknowledged that she had been protected by an officer, who was lately dead, and had bequeathed to her a handsome property, upon which her present

establishment had been founded. Again and again she averred to Mr. Lambton, that her errors had originated in ignorance and want of education; but that she thanked God for having lately enabled her to see her faults, and strengthened her heart with fortitude to abstain from a repetition of her former conduct; and again and again she most solemnly declared that at least twelve years had elapsed since she had exchanged a word with Mr. Dorrilon; but added, that from a recollection of past circumstances, he was, of all others, the last man upon whose purse or feelings she could have been tempted to commit an injury.

There was an ingenuousness, a virtue arising from the experience of its opposite principle, which displayed itself in the words of Fanny Belson, that operated strongly in her favour upon the benevolent Mr. Lambton; and when he found her heart already self-admonished, he made

it

it his study to endeavour to console one who appeared to have no friend on earth but himself.

His attentions were also directed towards Martha Brown; but it was a far less satisfactory task than that of visiting the truly-pitiable, and to him apparently-innocent Fanny Belson. Martha displayed sullenness at her confinement, and seemed to entertain no dread for the event of the accusation alleged against her. He was doubtful whether to judge her conduct the effect of satisfied innocence, or of that guilt, which, by affected negligence, endeavours to impose itself for innocence upon its observers: she appeared careless of listening to his salutary admonitions; and in words suited to the lowness of her birth and education, constantly repeated to him, that she knew her way out of the wood.

At the expiration of about three weeks Mr. Dorrilon returned, and the tale with which he was greeted on his arrival, ap-

peared to make a considerable impression on his feelings. When the life of a fellow-being was concerned, he said, the slighter ceremonies should be set aside by every humane and honest heart; he therefore candidly avowed his former acquaintance with Fanny Belson, and even allowed that he knew her to have become a resident of the city, but declared that he had not, to his knowledge, seen her since she had dwelt in it; and above all, strenuously averred that he believed her incapable of the criminal act which appearances had attached to her.

Various were the opinions circulated through the city on the agitated point; the handwriting of Fanny Belson had again and again been compared with the characters of the cheque, and an almost equal number of voices had declared the similarity and dissimilarity which they said existed between them. Some were of opinion that certain condemnation must attend both her and the old woman; others believed,

believed, that unless substantial evidence arose against them, they must be acquitted, from the presumptive proof upon which they were now detained.

At length arose the morning on which the judges entered the city, and the following day was appointed for the trial of the two female prisoners. About the hour of noon Mr. Lambton once more visited them, exhorting them to remember how near was the period which was to decide their fate. He found Fanny Belson in the same calm state of mind in which he had ever beheld her since the first moment of her imprisonment, declaring her innocence, but in words devoid of irritation or vehemence.

Martha Brown appeared greatly disturbed in mind—"Is it to-morrow, sir," she asked, "that I am to be tried?"

Mr. Lambton replied in the affirmative.

"You have heretofore, sir," she rejoined, "been so kind as to ask me whether you could render me any service; you can

do me a very great one, if you will condescend to consent to perform it. Pray, sir, let it be known all through the city that I am resolved to turn king's evidence to-morrow, and save myself."

Mr. Lambton endeavoured to draw her into further explanation, but without effect. He inquired of her if Fanny Belson were innocent or guilty? if she were the person against whom she intended to make confession? if any other persons had been concerned in the affair? But he could obtain no answer from her but that she had resolved to turn evidence, and by condemning the guilty, to save herself; to which she added—"You will recollect, reverend sir, that I told you long ago I knew my way out of the wood."

During the whole of the day preceding that appointed for the trial, Dorrilon appeared restless and uneasy. Mrs. Dorrilon remarked the state of his feelings, and could not forbear imagining that it was a proof of his attachment to Fanny Belson, and

and his fear of her capital condemnation, from which it was not in his power to preserve her, as, in the case of forgery, the crown had become the prosecutor.

As she sat by the window in the afternoon, she saw Gertrude Lambton three or four times successively pass the house, towards which she frequently directed her eyes—"In spite of all the opposition which her friendship has experienced," considered Amelia, "she is perhaps wishing to see me, that she may endeavour to console me at this trying moment; it would soothe my heart to enjoy her conversation; but I will not break the promise which I have made to my husband."

Dorrilon remained at home during the greater part of the evening; he was silent, and appeared dejected. A few moments after the removal of the supper-table, a note was delivered to him; he asked if it required an answer, and was replied to in the negative. He read it twice, placed it upon the table before him, and sat immersed in thought.

After a short interval he read it a third time, placed it in his pocket, and left the apartment. Amelia heard him enter his study, where he remained only a few minutes, and then quitted the house.

The clock struck eleven, and still Dorrilon did not return. At the expiration of another half-hour Mrs. Dorrilon took her candle, and proceeded towards her chamber. In passing through a gallery which looked into a garden at the back of the house, and casting her eyes towards the casements, to which they were attracted by the brilliancy of a moonlight night, she perceived two persons standing in one of the walks, and on approaching nearer to the window, she distinguished one of them to be her husband, and the other a female, closely wrapt in a dark shawl which descended to her feet. She immediately supposed it to be some friend of the unhappy Fanny Belson, supplicating him for that intercession in her favour which it was by law rendered impossible for him to make

make in her behalf, and doubted not that the note which she had seen him receive that evening had been sent to request the interview—" Poor deluded girl! Heaven have mercy on thee!" she mentally pronounced, and retired to her chamber.

The declaration of Martha Brown having, in compliance with her request, been made publicly known through the city, it was deemed expedient that she should undergo a private examination, previous to the opening of the court. When first questioned, she appeared reluctant to speak, wishing, as she expressed herself, to make her confession before the judge; but being, with some little difficulty, overruled in this inclination, she declared herself prepared to answer any interrogatories that might be advanced to her.

The questions which then followed were —" Was it from Miss Belson that you received the cheque?"

" No, it was not."

" Are you acquainted whether Miss Belson

Belson has any knowledge of the transaction?"

"I am. I know her to be perfectly innocent."

"If you can thus steadily exculpate her, you can doubtless name the guilty party?"

"Yes, I can. I told the reverend Mr. Lambton yesterday, that I would speak the truth at my trial, and condemn the guilty."

"Who is it that is guilty?"

"I am sorry that such a misfortune should happen to such a worthy man as Mr. Lambton, but it was his sister, Miss Gertrude Lambton, who forged the paper."

Consternation seized all present.—"Are you positive of what you say?" was the subsequent inquiry addressed to her.

"I cannot be mistaken," she answered, "for it was written in my cottage."

The banker, upon whose house the forgery had been attempted to be committed, was a witness to the confession of Martha Brown;

Brown; and in spite of the remonstrances of some present, who felt more pity for the family with whom she was connected than the culpable individual herself, proper officers were dispatched to conduct her to their presence.

During their absence various were the questions, as it may naturally be supposed, which were advanced to Martha Brown relative to her acquaintance with Miss Lambton, and the motive by which that young lady had been actuated in fixing upon Mr. Dorrilon as the object of her iniquitous attempt.

The old woman was now become extremely communicative, and the truth flowed unrestrained from her lips; but as her account was more diffuse than was necessary to the elucidation of the subject, and frequently also entangled in its progress, we shall give an account of the mysterious transaction in our own words.

Daily instances prove that those who are possessed of the strongest learning frequently

frequently nourish the weakest of minds, for which assertion we do not need a more striking example than that of the great author of Rasselas, and an individual of this description was Gertrude Lambton.

Martha Brown was one of those women constantly found in every corner of the globe, who draw gratuities from the purses of the weak and credulous, by pretending to the gift of fortune-telling, and for several years past Gertrude Lambton had been in the habit of listening to the augurations of this modern Sybil.

Martha Brown had a nephew named Charles Russel; he was a sailor on board a frigate, and whenever his ship was moored in the roads, and he obtained a temporary leave of absence from the vessel, he passed the time in a visit to his aunt. He was a young man of about twenty-four years of age, of a good form, and of a healthy and prepossessing countenance; in short, he was, upon the whole, what is usually denominated a vulgar beauty.

It is an undeniable truth, that affections and inclinations do not rise in the heart, according to the assimilating situations of those by whom they are inspired or experienced; but it rests with every breast either to repel or indulge such sensations at their birth, and to adhere to that line of conduct which can alone preserve those distinctions in society which act unitedly towards the happiness of the whole. But discretion was by no means a characteristic of Gertrude Lambton. She not only felt that the young man had gained an ascendancy over her feelings, but allowed him to draw the confession from her lips, and the avowal being once made, every day tended more strongly to link the chain by which she had voluntarily bound herself.

Still, if not a sense of shame, a sense of pride resolved her, if possible, to keep her unfortunate connexion a secret. She preferred Charles to all other men for himself alone; he preferred her, because she was

his

his superior in rank and in birth; and although the advantages which her purse was at present able to afford him were slender, he looked forward to the time when circumstances might increase her power of bestowing.

Gertrude herself feared that she perceived the motives from which he was allied to her; but still she was far from wishing to relinquish his society, and conscious, as she knew him to be, of the dominion which he possessed over her heart, she judged, that if not wholly impracticable, it would be in the highest degree dangerous to her reputation to attempt to effect a separation, if even such were her inclination.

As their intimacy increased, Charles became emboldened in soliciting pecuniary favours, and Gertrude was mortified by seeing herself coolly regarded, when her ability could not keep pace with his demands. In this dilemma she had revolved a thousand plans for endeavouring to procure the

the means of answering his requests, and had not been able to extract from any one of them the assistance which she was desiring to find.

At this juncture she became acquainted with Dorrilon; she perceived his easy temper, and also observed that he regarded her with some degree of preference; she accordingly spread her nets. By unremitting attentions to the wife, she threw herself constantly in the way of the husband. At first Dorrilon respected her for the partiality which she evinced for her to whom he was himself most partial: his vanity was next flattered by the adroit and well-selected opportunities which she took of convincing him that her friendship extended also to himself: a stratagem, artfully planned, and successfully executed, led him unexpectedly to meet her at Martha Brown's cottage, and he became the victim of her finely-spun entanglements.

From this moment the purse of Dorrilon became the purse of Gertrude Lambton,

ton, and whilst the deluded wife frequently shed tears of gratitude for what she considered to be the overflowings of a feeling and pitying heart, evincing itself in the distribution of little indulgences to herself and her children, how far was she from conjecturing the source from which the ability of bestowing them was obtained!

Gertrude was careful not to make any appointment with Dorrilon when Charles Russel was on shore, and Charles was satisfied to receive her increasing bounty without inquiring from whence it came. Martha Brown was purchased to her interest, and spoke only with her tongue.

When intimacies of the disgraceful nature of that which existed between Dorrilon and Gertrude Lambton are once contracted, the folly in which they were formed usually extends itself farther, and renders a mutual communication of secrets an apparently-strengthening tie to their improprieties. Hence Dorrilon had confessed

fessed to Miss Lambton his former acquaintance with Fanny Belson, of which knowledge we have seen the use made by her, in the false ideas which she instilled into the mind of Mrs. Dorrilon.

At length Dorrilon became repentant of his folly, and weary of his injudiciously-formed acquaintance; and it was at this period that he proposed to his wife to retire into Wales. On the evening previous to the day appointed for his setting out, Gertrude met him, by appointment, at their usual rendezvous; she introduced wine, and having tempted him to taste it freely, she demanded of him the sum of five hundred pounds. Having already determined in future to withstand her exorbitant solicitations, he threw down a few notes upon the table, and resolutely quitted the cottage; at which time rendered forgetful, equally by the hurried state of his mind, and the wine which he had swallowed, his gloves and handkerchief were left by him in the place.

Foiled

Foiled for the first time in her attempts, Gertrude became incensed: the plan of the forgery was determined upon by her; and the name of the unfortunate Fanny Belson selected, as one which she considered, upon an explanation of circumstances, would not fail to throw the appearance of culpability upon her who bore it.

But although Martha Brown had thus far consented to act under her guidance, the walls of a prison brought her in some degree to repentance, and she resolved not to condemn her soul by suffering an innocent being to be deprived of life through her taciturnity. Still she wished, if possible, to save Gertrude Lambton from shame and punishment, and to this end she acquainted Mr. George Lambton with her intention of impeaching the guilty; not doubting, that through the channel of his lips, the information would reach his sister, and prepare her to protect herself. Her caution had the desired effect; Gertrude

trude perfectly understood the meaning conveyed to her by the warning voice, which she inwardly cursed for what she denominated its treachery. After passing and repassing the house of Dorrilon in the course of the afternoon, in the hope of being able to behold him, but in vain, she wrote to him a note supplicating an interview that night at the bottom of his own garden. It was penned in terms so touching to the heart of feeling, that Dorrilon could not refuse compliance, although he had privately determined never to converse with her more. At their meeting she briefly stated to him the necessity for her immediately absenting herself from that part of the country; and declaring herself without a single pound, besought him to grant her the means of escape from certain ignominy and death. He was moved to comply with her request, and when the officers of justice were sent in quest of her, it was found that she had quitted the city

at

at one o'clock that morning, and all traces of her route were supposed to be lost.

Upon this confession, Fanny Belson was instantly liberated, and escorted to her home amidst the loudest acclamations and congratulations of the multitude.

Martha Brown, in consequence of certain points upon which she had admitted a faulty conduct, was detained some hours longer; but as no witness appeared against her, and her own confession was insufficient to her condemnation, she was ultimately dismissed, with a severe reprimand to guard her conduct in future.

In the course of the day it was found that Charles Russel had been the companion of Gertrude Lambton in her flight; the progress of time announced them to have reached France, and the annals of after-days recorded that, disagreeing with each other, they had separated, and that want and misery had closed the eyes of the female seducer.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

THE transactions of the day had been so universally and publicly discussed throughout the city, that it had been impossible to shield them from the knowledge of Mrs. Dorrilon; but she still retained her self-possession of mind, and however great the shock sustained by her feelings, she did not weakly expose the workings of her soul to the animadversion of observers. The day passed away, and Dorrilon did not appear at his home; the shades of evening fell to the earth, and still he came not. The anxiety of mind which she was now experiencing, Amelia did not attempt to conceal; she did not blush to confess her interest in the fate of the father of her children. As the hours still crept on, and no intelligence arrived,

her misery became so acute, that she sent out various messengers to make inquiries concerning him. All their researches proved fruitless; he had not been seen by any one; consequently, if he had quitted the place, it had been on foot. At length a servant, who had by accident been crossing the garden, acquainted her that he had discovered his master in a little building at its extremity, which was denominated the hermitage. Without a reply she immediately darted out in quest of him.

The light of the moon led her to the spot, and she perceived him extended upon the earth, with his face buried in his hands. She knelt down by his side, and taking one of his hands, and pressing it tenderly in hers—"Augustus, dear Augustus," she said, "I beseech you to arouse yourself, and speak to me."

A deep groan burst from his lips.

In a softened tone of voice, Amelia repeated her entreaty.

Slowly raising his head, but averting his

his countenance from hers—"Blessed be this hour of darkness," he pronounced, "which spares me the additional pang of beholding your features fixed on mine! I am sensible of my guilt—I ask not forgiveness, for I am convinced that it cannot be extended towards me. I only request the privilege of bidding you and my children farewell! and will then withdraw my hated presence from you for ever!"

"Withdraw yourself from us, Augustus!" ejaculated Mrs. Dorrilon; "what is it that you mean?"

"What can I mean," returned Augustus, "but that I know myself unworthy to hold converse with your sainted purity? that when you teach your children the lessons of virtue, you cannot forbear to point out to them their father, as a mark of weakness and of scorn; and that you can but desire the eternal absence of a being whose conduct has been cruel as a husband, culpable in example as a parent."

"What," exclaimed Amelia, "desert my husband! alienate myself from the father of my children! what is there upon earth that can recompense me for such a loss? I loved you even when I believed you to be persisting in error, because I then pitied you; how much more then do I now love you, when I perceive your senses awake to your past improprieties, and your soul alive to repentance! Can I then, at the very moment when you are becoming valuable to me, suffer myself to abandon you—permit you to cast yourself a wanderer upon the face of the earth, whilst there exists to you the bosom of a wife on which your aching head may rest—the arms of your babes to enfold you with their innocent caresses, and strengthen you in the pursuance of a conduct which may render us all eventually blest? No, no, my Augustus, the courtesan may fly the empty purse; the envious coquette may spurn the heart which has not been exclusively her own, but she who feels herself

herself really a wife and a mother, will hail the return of her penitent with all the affection of a first love!"

Augustus cast himself upon his knees before her, and hiding his face in her hands, burst into a flood of tears.

"Come, come," said Amelia, "I did not come hither to exact this humiliation; I have ever considered that it was your head, not your heart, that had wandered: in token, therefore, that you accept the amnesty which I offer, press that heart once more where it is, and ever will be, most welcome;" and as she spoke she raised him from the earth, and held him in her strict embrace.

Dorrilon was still unable to command his utterance; he sunk down upon a seat by her side, and gave free vent to his tears.

Still retaining his hand in hers, she endeavoured by silent caresses to reassure his feelings. At length—"Oh Amelia, angel, divinity," he said, "in what words shall I—can I express——"

"Not

"Not in any words the purport which you, my dear Augustus, are desirous of conveying," replied Amelia; "let the test rest solely with your actions, and from this hour let us not renew a subject which may only embitter, but cannot tend to calm our future prospects. I trust, nay I am convinced, that you are fully reclaimed—experience has worked a change which admonition might never have produced—and should you ever, which I do not believe that you ever will, feel yourself relapsing towards the side of weakness, restrain yourself by recollecting that you are a father, and accountable to Heaven for the example which you afford your children."

Augustus clasped her fervently in his arms; his embrace was to Amelia the earnest of future happiness—to himself the agony of joy.

It was accordingly resolved that they should immediately proceed to Wales, where Dorrilon had already made a purchase;

chase; and by once more devoting themselves to the pleasures of retirement, and domestic satisfaction, labour to repair that period which had been lost in their happiness. The event equalled their most sanguine expectations. The husband arose purified from repentance; and Amelia continued, as she had ever been, the best of wives.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

PRINTED FOR

A. K. NEWMAN & CO.

AT THE

Minerva-Press,

LEADENHALL-STREET, LONDON.

	£	s.	d.
Baron of Falconberg, or Childe Harolde in Prose, by Bridget Bluemantle, 3 vols.	0	15	0
Dangerous Secrets, a Scottish Tale, 2 vols.	0	10	6
Theresa, or the Wizard's Fate, 4 vols.	1	2	0
Celebrity, by Mrs. Pilkington, 3 vols.	0	15	0
Border Chieftains, by Miss Houghton, 2d edition, 3 vols.	0	18	0
Barozzi, or the Venetian Sorceress, a Romance, by Mrs. Smith, Author of the Caledonian Bandit, &c. 2 vols.	0	10	6
Duncan and Peggy, a Scottish Tale, by Mrs. Helme, new edition, 3 vols.	0	15	0
Discontented Man, by A. F. Holstein, 3 vols.	0	16	6
Vaga, or a View of Nature, by Mrs. Peck, 2d edition, 3 vols.	0	18	0
Lady Jane's Pocket, by the Author of Silvanella, 4 vols.	1	2	0
The Bristol Heiress, by Mrs. Sleath, Author of the Orphan of the Rhine, &c. 5 vols.	1	5	0
Family Estate, or Lost and Won, by Mrs. Ross, Author of Modern Calypso, &c. &c. 3 vols.	0	15	0
Donald Monteith, the Handsomest Man of the Age, by Selina Davenport, Author of the Sons of the Viscount and the Daughters of the Earl, and the Hypocrite, 5 vols.	1	5	0
Romantic Facts, or Which is his Wife? 4 vols.	1	0	0
Emmeline, or the Orphan of the Castle, by Charlotte Smith, new edition, 4 vols.	1	2	0

THE

ONE-POUND NOTE,

And other Tales.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

FRANCIS LATHOM,

AUTHOR OF

ITALIAN MYSTERIES; MYSTERIOUS FREEBOOTER; LONDON; ROMANCE OF THE HEBRIDES; THE UNKNOWN; MEN AND MANNERS; MYSTERY; FATAL VOW; VERY STRANGE BUT VERY TRUE; ISHMENT, &c. &c.

VOL. II.

London:

Printed at the Minerva Press for

A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

1820.

Tale the Third.

THE PROPHECY;

OR,

THE EARL AND THE GAMEKEEPER.

A TALE OF WONDER.

When wicked dreams abuse the curtain'd sleep.

SHAKESPEARE.

TO THE READER.

THE tradition upon which the following Tale is founded, and the adventures of Fenella Lochiel, are both still popular in Scotland.—The circumstance of the earl of Glenalpine's dream is a well-attested fact, which occurred in Fifeshire not half a century ago; and the Devil's Cave still exists on the spot described.

THE PROPHECY.

CHAPTER I.

IT was towards the close of a damp and autumnal evening, in the year 1680, that a traveller stopped at the gate of a cottage, situated about an hundred yards from the sea, on the Fifeshire coast, and inquired if he were proceeding in the direct road to Balquitther Castle?

The cottage was embosomed in a sheltered excavation, in the sand-rocks which form the characteristic of that coast, and an old woman, who had come out to reply to his inquiry, mounting a slight acclivity by the side of her dwelling, and pointing

her finger across the country, told him that if he pursued the direction in which she was instructing him, he could not fail to reach the spot she had named, as it was scarcely two miles distant.—" If the night wer'na sae misty," she said, "ye could see the castle as plain as if ye were beneath the walls, for it stands on an unco high rock:" she added, "and I'll engage to say, that when ye ascend the next hill, ye'll ha'e lights enough to lead ye to the spot without further inquiry."

The traveller asked to what lights she was alluding?

" The dead lights," replied the old woman; " ye must be an unco stranger here gin ye dinna ken that the auld dowager countess of Glenalpine lies a corp, and will be buried in the Abbot's chapel, on the Black Height, to-night; and it has aye been the custom o' the family to bury their dead at the setting o' the sun by the light o' torches."

The traveller made no reply, except by thanking

thanking the woman for her information, and proceeded according to her instructions. In a short time the road became diverted from the sea-shore, and wound amongst the rocks, whose sides were barren of vegetation, and so rugged, that the path along which he was moving was at intervals scarcely discernible. At length, having mounted to a considerable eminence above the sea-shore, meagre traits of cultivation began to display themselves, in stunted fir-trees and straggling underwood, blasted and shrivelled by the keen winds with which they were visited from the ocean. As he continued to proceed, occasional knots of cypress and larch broke the sameness of the scene, and appeared to bespeak his approach towards a spot which they had been planted to assist in sheltering; but the growing darkness of the night, and the increasing mist which clouded the atmosphere, rendered his vision unable to penetrate to any considerable distance, and he walked cautiously

tiously forward, only using precaution not to deviate from the almost-indiscernible road, till a sudden winding in the path gave him a distant view of various lights, which gleamed upon the darkened canopy of the sky; and these lights he doubted not to proceed from the torches which the old woman had informed him would illuminate the obsequies of the late countess of Glenalpine.

In a few minutes he was able to descry the outline of the castle. He beheld it an immense and stupendous building, spreading along the brow of a projecting rock, which, from the distance at which he now viewed it, appeared to overhang the ocean. Silent and solitary, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the spot on which it rested, and to frown defiance on the more diminutive objects by which it was surrounded; and the extent and darkness of the woods, which in gloomy grandeur closed in the distance, cast an awful and impressive solemnity on the scene, of which

which partial features only were displayed to view by the uncertain and varying lights of the torches, which, by their gradual approach towards the castle, were evidently returning from the holy spot where the remains of the deceased had been deposited.

The road, by degrees, now became more regular, and the clusters of wood more frequent. The traveller accelerated his pace, and had arrived within a quarter of a mile of the castle, when the lights entering, as he conjectured, the courtyard, became obscured from his view. For a few moments all was now involved in darkness, and no beacon beamed to point out his way; but shortly, lights moving in every direction within the castle, shone through the casements, and guiding himself towards these, he quickly reached the drawbridge, which he found lowered, and having crossed it, he sounded the horn affixed to the castle-gate.

It was opened by a domestic, who, in-

quiring his business, and being informed that it was with the earl of Glenalpine, replied—"that he was certain the earl could not be spoken to that evening;" but, inviting him to enter, told him, "that he would, if he pleased, conduct him to the earl's steward, maister Nicholas Baldrummie, to whom he could make any communication which he might wish conveyed to the earl himself."

The traveller acquiesced, and having entered the gate, which his conductor immediately closed, the latter led the way across a courtyard, from the opposite extremity of which an arched passage brought them into the area of the castle, and from thence to the great hall, where the tenantry and vassals of Balquitther, who had formed the train of the solemnity just past, were, according to the custom of the country, forgetting their sorrow for the loss of the deceased, in regaling themselves with the good things of life in the most lavish abundance. The servant took a lamp

a lamp from one of the tables on which the feast was served, and still preceding the stranger, led him through various stone passages and vaulted chambers into an apartment where a cheerful fire was blazing on the hearth, and where he requested him to take a seat, whilst awaiting the arrival of maister Baldrummie, whom he promised immediately to send to him.

The stranger wandered about the apartment, passing the solitary interval of expectation in examining the paintings with which the walls were decorated; they appeared to be chiefly portraits, and, as he concluded, of the family of Glenalpine, who had for centuries past been the lords and possessors of the castle and the surrounding domain; but upon one in particular, which was suspended over the chimney, his eye attentively rested; it represented a youth of about eighteen years, of a most prepossessing and animated countenance, clad in the Highland garb, and

grasping in his hand a richly-ornamented dirk. The youth thus portrayed was sir Robert Dundonald, the younger brother of the present earl of Glenalpine.

His eye was still directed to the portrait, when the door of the apartment was opened, and Nicholas Baldrummie appeared. He was a man in the vale of years, but of a hale and handsome person; his grey hairs claiming the tribute of respect for a countenance naturally pleasant, but tinctured with the visible traces of grief, arising from the circumstances of the hour. His garb was plain, and becoming the occasion for which his heart was sorrowing; his manners were easy, mild, and prepossessing.

The stranger, whom Nicholas Baldrummie now for the first time beheld, appeared about forty-five years of age; he was tall and athletic, but his limbs were well proportioned; his eyes were large, black, and penetrating; his cheeks were ruddy, but the whole of his complexion was remarkably

markably dark; his hair, of the deepest jet, curled upon his forehead, and his beard, of the same sable hue, was suffered to encroach, unshaven, down the sides of his face. His dress was neat and good, but it was plain, such as bespoke him of the ordinary walks of life; but his address was superior to the rank which his appearance denoted him to hold in society.

Having pronounced a few words of salutation to the stranger at his entrance, Baldrummie proceeded to inquire his business with the earl?

The stranger replied, that his name was Kenneth M'Koul, and that he was the person who had been lately engaged, by lord Glenalpine's agent in Edinburgh, to be his gamekeeper and the ranger of his parks.

Baldrummie instantly acknowledged his acquaintance with the expected arrival of a person to hold the situation of which he spoke, and giving him welcome to the castle, acquainted him how impossible it

was

was that he should that evening be introduced into the presence of the earl, who was affected with the liveliest grief at the recent death of his mother, and who had retired to the solitude of his private apartment immediately on his return from accompanying the ashes of his parent to their last abode, but assured him that every attention should be shewn him which he could have claimed from the earl's having publicly sanctioned his forming a part of his household.

The gamekeeper returned the steward thanks for his civility, and Baldrummie having informed him that the situation he was come to fill entitling him to sit at the same table with himself and his wife, the apartment they were now in would be their common room of meeting, urged him to seat himself without ceremony by the fire, and having directed refreshments to be placed before him, the old man took a chair in the opposite corner of the chimney, saying, that the reverence and affection

tion which he bore the late countess, rendered it repellent to his feelings to join the party assembled in the hall of the castle.

Kenneth having partaken of the supper spread before him, and drank a few glasses of whiskey to the toasts proposed by Nicholas Baldrummie, all tending to evince his partiality for the family, in which his life had been spent; Kenneth, expressing himself fatigued with his walk from Edinburgh, which he had performed, he said, since seven o'clock in the morning, retired to his chamber; and Baldrummie shortly after, having put the period which was warranted by the rules of decency to the revels in the hall, and ascertained that the earl had repaired to rest, and did not require his attendance that night, betook himself likewise to bed, but not without casting a look of sorrow, and an accompanying sigh, at the apartment of his late beloved mistress, as he passed it in the way to his own.

On the following morning, when Kenneth

neth descended to the apartment where he had been entertained on the preceding evening, he was met by Nicholas Baldrummie, who informed him that his niece would join them as soon as the breakfast-table was spread. During the interval which preceded that ceremony, Baldrummie, perceiving the eyes of Kenneth turned towards the portrait of sir Robert Dundonald, exclaimed—"Is nae that a bonny and a handsome laddie?—Ay, and he was as guid as he was weel-fared. God rest him wharever he be, dead or alive!"

The gamekeeper inquired whom the portrait represented, and Baldrummie having informed him, proceeded speaking thus:—"Can it be that ye never heard the sad history of that unhappy young gentleman? It was in a' mouths at the time it happened; but the misfortunes o' ithers are shune forgotten by the warld. Oh, could my respected and lamented mistress, the poor deceased countess, have beheld

him

him by the side o' her deeing bed, and clasped him in her arms at her last moments, she had departed happy! But although she was miserable at his mysterious fate, she did na repine against the will o' Providence; she was too guid and too holy to dispute the commands o' Heaven. She deed wi' his name on her tongue; I was beside her when her last breath took its flight—But she is now wi' the angels i' paradise." The old man crossed himself as he spoke, and inclined his head towards a crucifix which stood on the mantlepiece.

M'Koul declared himself utterly ignorant of the circumstance to which his companion was alluding, and begged him to explain the particulars of an event towards which he had so strongly excited his curiosity.

The old steward, prefacing his story with repeating the degree of relationship in which the subject of the portrait stood to his master, the earl of Glenalpine, proceeded

ceeded by saying, that about a year and a half, or somewhat more, from the present period, sir Robert Dundonald, at that time twenty-two years of age, had gone out one morning to hunt, in company with two young gentlemen, who were on a visit to him at the castle, and attended by a train of servants and hunters: that, on the return of the party in the evening, their first inquiry had been whether sir Robert were arrived at the castle, as he had been separated from them, in the course of the afternoon, in a long chase, which but a few of them had pursued to the death; and they imagined him to have been fatigued with the sport, and to have turned his horse's head towards the castle. —"But, alas!" continued Nicholas, "he was nae at the castle, nor has he ever been at it since, puir ehield! The night passed on in misery indescribable to the guid countess, her eldest son, and their sympathizing friends; but still the object of their concern appeared not. Wi' the

first

first dawn o' the mornin' numerous messengers were sent out in every airt, to search the surrounding forests; but a' their efforts proved ineffectual—neither horse nor rider were to be found. Thousands and thousands o' pounds were offered by the earl and his disconsolate mither for intelligence of their lamented brither and son, but their endeavours hae, as yet, met nae reward—his fate remains involved in the same mystery in which it was wrapped at the moment of his disappearance. Ah!" added he, approaching the spot where the portrait hung as he spoke, "I truly believe that I may say, without o'erstepping the limits o' veracity, that i' the heart o' that youth, whase likeness ye there behold, every Christian virtue held a place; never did I ken a human being sae truly amiable, sae truly the friend o' mankind, as the brave and bonny Robert Dundonald."

It was with difficulty that Nicholas could repress his tears while speaking.

Whilst

Whilst he was yet uttering the praises of him whom he loved with a parent's affection, the apartment was entered by a young female, of an elegant form and interesting countenance. She caught the sound of the name which Baldrummie was pronouncing, her features underwent an immediate change from placidity to agitation, and casting a hasty glance at the portrait of sir Robert, she moved to a window, to conceal her emotion from the stranger.

After a few moments, Nicholas introduced her to Kenneth, as his niece, by the name of Robina. She received him courteously, and seating herself at the breakfast-table, apologized for the absence of her aunt, upon whose mind, she said, the shock which she had received from the death of her friend and mistress had so severely preyed, that she was not only too much depressed in spirits to quit her chamber, but, she feared, also very unwell in health.

Seated

Seated opposite to Robina at the breakfast-table, Kenneth had an opportunity of observing her beautiful form and interesting countenance; her bright blue eyes beamed with complacency and intelligence; her auburn hair fell in luxuriant ringlets upon her finely-turned neck and shoulders; her complexion, of a snowy whiteness, gained additional lustre from being opposed to the sable suit in which she was habited; and the sweet tones of her voice completed the spell of fascination which her exterior beauties had raised.

During their repast, Robina inquired of her uncle whether he had that morning seen the earl of Glenalpine, or if he were acquainted what was the state of his health and spirits? Baldrummie replied that he had not yet been summoned to his apartment, but that he expected every moment to be called thither, as the earl, on his return from the funeral of his mother, had signified his intention to father Celestine, his domestic priest, of attending

mass

mass that morning at the Abbot's chapel, and had commanded that every solemnity should grace the hour, in respect to the memory of his deceased parent, for the health of whose soul especial prayers were to be offered.

A silence ensued, which was broken by Robina inquiring the name of Kenneth, and saying she did not recollect by what appellation her uncle had introduced him to her. Kenneth himself replied to her question, and as he did so, the eye of Robina being drawn to his countenance, she said—"I do not recollect ever to have heard that name; but I have a confused recollection of having seen you before, though I cannot immediately charge my memory where it was that we may have met."

Kenneth gazed steadfastly upon her as she spoke, and she imagined that she perceived an alteration in his countenance the reverse of satisfactory.

"Indeed, lady, I think you are mistaken,"

taken," he replied; "for I feel positive that I never beheld you till this hour."

"Sometimes a similarity of countenance to one whom we have known, leads us into an error of this nature," rejoined Robina.

"True, lady," he answered; "and it must be such an impression which is now acting upon your feelings."

The subject was dropped, but Robina thought that she could perceive Kenneth proceed with less satisfaction in his meal, and likewise display an abstraction of thought from the scene in which he was engaged.

A servant presently brought intelligence that the earl was preparing to attend mass, and required the presence of his steward in his private apartment.

"Are you a Catholic?" asked Baldrummie, addressing M'Koul.

The reply was in the affirmative.

"I am glad to find that ye are sae," rejoined the steward, "as every individual o' this

o' this household is o' that persuasion. Ye will doubtless therefore join us i' the worship o' this morning, out o' respect to the maister wha ye are come to serve."

Kenneth answered that it would give him pleasure to do so; and Nicholas informed him, that, when he had seen the earl, he would return, and be his companion to the chapel.

On the return of Nicholas, he told Kenneth that he had informed the earl of his arrival, but that he should not at present attempt to introduce him into his presence, for that his mind was indivisibly directed to one sad subject, from which he did not wish it for a time to be diverted. He added, that it would be yet nearly half an hour before the earl and his household proceeded to the chapel; but as he had some directions respecting the monument, which was intended to grace the tomb of his lamented mistress, to give to a person whom he expected to meet there, he proposed that they should set forward without

without delay. Kenneth readily assented, and they began their walk.

The Abbot's chapel, which was the family place of worship for the inhabitants of the castle, together with the vassalage connected with the domain, was situated at the distance of little more than a rood from the castle, in a natural excavation on the top of a rocky eminence, known by the name of the Black Height. As they advanced towards it, Baldrummie informed his companion that it was an edifice of considerably greater antiquity than the castle, being supposed to be coeval with the celebrated cathedral of St. Andrews in that county; that it had once been the house of devotion to a monastery named St. Cyrus, of which the ruins were still existing in a valley at the foot of the opposite declivity of the Black Height from that on which they were approaching it.

On drawing near the chapel, Kenneth perceived the exterior of the building to display equal taste and magnificence; and

upon entering, he found the decorations and monumental structures to exceed most of those which an opportunity had been given him of inspecting.

Whilst Baldrummie was occupied in giving directions to some workmen whom he had found awaiting his arrival, Kenneth passed the time in viewing the ancient monuments and paintings with which the religious edifice was embellished; and from amongst the number, an ancient tomb, which was composed of a black and polished marble, veined with white, and which was inserted in a niche to the right of the altar, particularly arrested his attention, not less on account of its antiquity, than of the remarkable representation which was inscribed upon it: it was a strange and uncouth mixture of sculpture and painting. The inscription, which was in Latin, bespoke it to have been erected in the fourteenth century, to the memory of Malcolm, earl of Glenalpine, who, after having fought with the greatest bravery,

success,

success, and renown, in the wars of his country, against the attempts of southern invaders, had providentially been rescued from the hand of a murderer by the immediate interposition of Providence in his cause. It further added, that, in gratitude to the Power which had so miraculously and openly wrought his preservation, he had expended vast sums in beautifying the Abbot's chapel, and enriched its altar with silver to the amount of five thousand merks.

The painting, which appeared to be executed upon wood, was framed in the stone-work towards the base of the monument, and was formed of two compartments. In the first was represented a knight richly clad, who was reclined upon a couch, with his eyes raised towards a brilliant cloud, which hung floating over his head, and in the centre of which appeared the bust of a cherub, that seemed to be addressing him. In the second were seen two knights in combat, one of whom

had just disarmed his antagonist, to whose aid the same cherub that formed a part of the first design was beheld extending its hand, from the same brilliant cloud, with a sword, which it was in the act of presenting to the half-conquered knight.

When Baldrummie at length approached him, Kenneth eagerly inquired an explanation of what he had been contemplating.

"That extraordinary piece o' antiquity," replied the steward, "for it is a work o' the fourteenth century, represents a most remarkable and solemn event i' the history o' the Glenalpines. He that ye perceive extended on the couch is the noble earl Malcolm, the greatest warrior o' his age; and the being to whom his regards are addressed is the brownie, or protecting genius, o' the family. It is," continued Nicholas, "a tradition weel worthy o' being listened to, as it displays not alane the magnanimity o' man, but as weel evinces the glory and kindness o' Heaven."

The

The old man, perceiving Kenneth attentive to his words, proceeded to relate the tradition to the following effect:—"The Glenalpines," he said, "had, for centuries past, been the peculiar favourites of their monarchs, not less on account of their valour in the field, than their unshaken loyalty in the day of rebellion; and alike had they been the favourites of Heaven, whose benignity had smiled upon their piety and good works. From the first origin of this family, it had been protected by a spirit, which had evinced the interest which it took in the fate of the Glenalpines, by having in past ages frequently appeared to the heads of their house, and assisted them not only with its counsel, but frequently also with its friendly interposition in their behalf, in the hour of danger or unhappiness; and one peculiarity which was said to attend it was, that its voice was never heard, nor its form beheld, by any individual but the immediate earl.

"Some time had elapsed since any act of the brownie's had appeared to excite the admiration or gratitude of the family, when Malcolm, earl of Glenalpine, returned from the wars, crowned with the laurels of glory, and enjoying, in a peculiar and almost-unprecedented degree, the favour of his sovereign. In the domestic pleasures which his castle afforded him, Malcolm now solaced himself for the rigours and the toils he had endured in the field of battle; and when reclined on the bosom of an affectionate wife, and surrounded by the caresses of a lovely offspring, he believed himself the happiest of mortals, and almost considered it beyond the power of accident to diminish his bliss. But, alas! how blind are mortals to those events with which the womb of fate may be pregnant, either in their favour or to their disadvantage!

"Second in favour to himself with the king of Scotland, stood sir William Dumblane. He was, like Malcolm, a soldier of

of courage, and a statesman of good policy; but these stronger virtues of the mind were not in him blended with the benevolent and milder feelings which existed in the heart of Glenalpine. With envy and with hatred sir William perceived the earl to stand nearer the affections of his sovereign than himself; he had no rival, at least none by many degrees so powerful as the earl, in the esteem of his monarch; if he were removed, the sun of royal favour would shine with its first brilliancy upon himself. Reflection on the point made its accomplishment appear desirable, and he ultimately resolved to exterminate the rival who created him eternal disquiet. Thus determined, upon the double plea of their having been brother leaders in the field, and of the pleasure which it might produce to them mutually, to recapitulate their past adventures in arms, sir William sent a pressing and cordial invitation to the earl, to visit him at his Castle of Dumblane, which

the unsuspicious Glenalpine accepting, in the course of a few days, became the guest of his concealed enemy.

"The first day was passed in social intercourse. The morning of the second was devoted to the chase; and in the evening of that day sir William had determined to invite his guest to walk with him in a wood at the back of his castle, and after having raised some subject for contention, to put a period to his existence with his own hand.

"The day had been remarkably warm, and the exercise of the chase fatiguing, and after the midday repast, the earl of Glenalpine retired to a private apartment for a few hours repose. He cast himself upon a couch, and soon sunk into a slumber, from which he was awakened by the sound of delightful music, breathed in soft and scarcely-audible notes: he raised his eyes, and beheld floating before him a thin and brilliant cloud, which, gradually unclosing, displayed to his view the bust

of

of a diminutive and angelic form, which, in tones of softness equal to the music by which they had been preceded, addressed to him these words—'Be on your guard against Dumblane—he seeks your life!' The speaker then became again gradually enveloped in the cloud, and to the same melodious strains with which it had appeared, faded from his view.

"The earl was well acquainted with the tradition of the brownie, which was the protectress of his race; and, as the appearance which he had just beheld corresponded in every respect with the description which had again and again been delivered to him of her manner of visiting his ancestors, he could not doubt that the peculiar favour of Heaven had been extended to him in the admonition which he had received. He could scarcely believe a man who was openly conducting himself towards him as a friend, and to whom he had never given the slightest cause for nourishing an opposite sentiment, to be

his foe in heart; but the nature of the warning which had just been given him was not to be doubted, and he prepared himself to encounter the threatened event.

"About the hour of twilight, sir William Dumblane, complaining of the excessive warmth of the apartment, invited the earl to walk with him, and enjoy the refreshment of the cool evening air.

"The earl complied, and Dumblane turned into a dark and shady path, which led into the centre of the wood at the back of the castle. A man who is determined to quarrel easily finds a cause for dispute: by various taunts, which fell from the tongue of Dumblane, his rival became excited to warmth. Dumblane artfully added fuel to the flame, and in a short time their swords flew from their scabbards to support their opinions.

"Glenalpine recollected the words of the brownie, but his honour, dearer to him than his life, was at this instant attacked, and worlds could not have bribed him to have

have slept upon its revenge. Glenalpine was a man of the first courage, and of the first skill in arms; but sir William possessed the advantage of a more athletic and muscular form. This, however, was a consideration, which, if reflected upon at all by the earl at the present moment, was utterly disregarded by him, and the combat began, Malcolm prefacing his first blow by saying—'I know no man to whose sword I would sooner oppose myself, as a soldier, than that of sir William Dumblane; but I did not expect to have met him as a predetermined murderer.'

"This unlooked-for address added fire to the already-heated blood of Dumblane, for truth pierces keenly to the heart of the villain, and he rushed to the contest with the ferocity of a savage, whilst the earl endeavoured to defend himself against his attack with the manly coolness of an undismayed spirit.

"After a severe conflict of some minutes, sir William succeeded in disarming his

antagonist, and throwing him upon one knee. At this instant the brilliant cloud which the earl had before beheld, and visible only to himself, appeared floating over him, and the head and arm of the friendly spirit issuing from its centre, placed in his hand a sword, and immediately vanished. Disengaging himself, by a momentary effort, from his triumphant enemy, the earl renewed the combat with increased vigour; every blow aimed by the sword with which he was now armed weakened the strength of his adversary, and Glenalpine ultimately laid him dead at his feet.

"Thus ends the tradition," said Nicholas; "this monument commemorates the event; and the splendid exertions of a' the arts that meet yer een at ilka turn, in this chapel, fully demonstrate the gratitude with which his noble heart was filled towards Providence for his unco miraculous deliverance."

Baldrummie now directed the attention

tion of Kenneth to the altar, where the massy silver candlesticks, the embossed vases, the richly-embroidered velvet cushions, and above all, the paintings, which, seated in gilt compartments, reached nearly to the arched and fretted roof of the building, displayed a most finished picture of the progress which had at that remote period been made in the arts.

Most of the congregation were now assembled, and Baldrummie, leading Kenneth to a seat, informed him that the earl was entering the chapel.

When the earl had taken his place, the eyes of Kenneth were naturally drawn towards his person. He beheld in him a man of about twenty-eight or thirty years of age, of a tall but well-made form; his countenance was more interesting than handsome; his cheeks were sunk; his complexion was pallid in the extreme. His eyes, which were dark and penetrating, evinced alike depression of spirits and a reflective mind; and the bloodless hand

hand with which Kenneth observed him to turn the leaves of his missal, added to the slow and languid step with which he had entered the chapel, bespoke his constitution to be weak and fragile.

The appearance of all present was pious and well regulated; and the mild Robina, as she sat with her eyes unvaryingly fixed on an ivory emblem of her promised salvation, which she bore in her hand, appeared in innocence and loveliness the semblance of a transfigurated saint.

The father Celestine now stood forward at the altar, and the ceremony commenced. The voice of the father was mild, but impressive and persuasive, and his venerable appearance added considerable weight to his words. The notes of the choristers were harmonious and unaffected; they appeared to sing the unlaboured praises of the heart in the acceptable tones of real gratitude. The performance of mass being ended, a hymn was chanted for the repose of lady Glenalpine's soul, and followed

lowed by a discourse from the lips of father Celestine, of which she was the theme, but in which he rather entreated others to imitate her virtues, than make them the subject of a fulsome panegyric. The sentiments which it conveyed were simple, but weighty; they sunk into the hearts of all, and drew tears from the eyes of many.

The attention of the earl was unbroken, and the watchful eye of the faithful Baldrummie scarcely wandered for a moment from his countenance; he knew the susceptibility of his heart, and he feared lest he should be overpowered by the acuteness of his feelings, whilst dwelling on that irreparable loss which he had so severely felt and acknowledged. But his composure remained unshaken, till the discourse of father Celestine had proceeded nearly to its close; Baldrummie then beheld him slowly raise his eyes, which had hitherto been bent to the ground, and directing them towards one certain spot, he there

there kept them fixed, gazing, as it appeared to his watchful guardian, on vacancy. He continued thus for a few moments immoveable, when suddenly the blood forsook his lips, a bewildered expression beamed in his eye, a convulsive sigh, almost amounting to a faint shriek, burst from his lips, and he sunk fainting upon the back of the chair on which he was seated.

Baldrummie immediately hastened to his assistance, and around the same spot crowded the domestics of the castle. Consternation seized on all present, and the religious ceremonies became suspended.

In the course of a short time the earl was restored. On recovering he raised his eyes slowly and timidly to the spot on which they had been rested previously to his falling into a state of insensibility; but he now viewed it without emotion, and sustaining himself on the arm of Baldrummie, he rose from his seat, and faintly pronounced—"Lead me to the castle."

His

His command was instantly obeyed, and leaning upon the arms of the steward and a confidential servant, named Aleck Ferguson, to whom he was much attached, and who had been his attendant from his boyish days, with slow and faltering steps he proceeded in silence towards Balquitther Castle, on his arrival at which he was immediately conducted to his chamber, without having assigned any cause for the sudden and violent emotion with which he had been affected in the chapel.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

DAVID, the present earl of Glenalpine, was in his seventh, and Robert, his brother, in his third year, when their father paid the universal debt of nature. The late earl had been the most affectionate of husbands, of fathers, and of masters: and the unfeigned regret of all who knew him followed his ashes to the tomb. The countess herself would have sunk under the privation which she had experienced, had she not called the reflections of religion to her aid, and resolved to exert her feelings, for the sake of those two beloved beings who owed to her their birth, and who must now look up to her for the tender offices of a father and mother united.

Efforts made in wisdom and piety are usually requited by a recompensing issue.

By

By compelling her mind to engage itself in the duties of a mother, the bitterness of the wound which she had at first experienced from the death of her husband became softened, if not subdued; and a calm resignation to the unalterable decrees of fate restored her heart, at least to quietude, if not to its pristine felicity.

For five years time glided on unmarked by any event of moment: at this period the dispositions of her two boys, especially of the elder, were beginning to unveil themselves, and the countess watched their unfolding with all the anxiety natural to a mother, whose hopes of beholding her offspring graced with all that can ennoble and embellish the mind, equally fears to discover the dross of human frailty amalgamating in their composition.

With the exception of the affection which they bore to each other, and the reverence which they felt for their amiable mother, their hearts, though equally inclined to a love of virtue, and a pursu-

ance

ance of the right, were cast in moulds greatly dissimilar to each other; and in constitutions, also, they were as oppositely formed as in the bent of their tempers and inclinations.

The animal system of David was, from his birth, weak and unhealthy; trifles depressed his spirits, and extraordinary exertion exhausted his strength. The sports which he most loved in boyhood, were such as could be pursued in the apartments and gardens of the castle; and as he approached towards manhood, books and conversation constituted his chief amusements; whilst the society which he preferred consisted of the domestic circle which composed his mother's fireside.

The robust frame of Robert, on the contrary, overflowed with health; and his limbs were strung with the manliest vigour; exercise was his delight; to range the mountains and the sea-shore, his favourite pastime; and the more laborious the pursuit in which he engaged, the more

more exuberant his spirits after it was accomplished. As he advanced in years, a love of intercourse with the world evinced itself in his words and actions; he eagerly sought acquaintance, and a participation in such sports as were to be found in the neighbourhood of Balquitther Castle; but much as he loved to range abroad, it must, in justice to his heart, be remarked, that he never returned home without the warmest satisfaction to the beloved associates whom he had left behind.

It must be almost needless to remark, that every instruction and accomplishment which the usages of the day admitted as a necessary part of education, were bestowed on them by their mother, and that whatever indulgence, under the restrictions of prudence, could contribute to their happiness, was lavishly permitted to their enjoyment. They were each provided with servants, suited to the opposite dispositions to which it was their duty to yield obedience; and Nicholas Baldrummie,

mie, who had never known any interest separated from the welfare of his fosterer, and his descendants, although he ever preserved the respectful distance of a domestic, still watched over them both with the keen solicitude of a parent.

The countess herself was as free from false pride as she was observant of those proper distinctions which, in forming the degrees, form alike the happiness of society. She knew the value of the faithful and long-tried Nicholas Baldrummie, and frequently made his breast the repository of confidential questions, which she was well aware that he would reply to with truth and interest.

One morning, about the time that David had completed his fifteenth year, the countess, accompanied by the present earl and Baldrummie, had walked to the Abbot's chapel, to inspect the progress of some repairs which it was undergoing; on their return to the castle, they found the greater part of the domestics assembled in

the

the courtyard, and perceived that the object of their attraction was a tall and bony woman, with a sallow and meagre countenance, which was, notwithstanding, lighted by an eye of archness and brilliancy, and whose tattered garments and ragged plaid but ill concealed her form beneath; and this being was, it appeared, a fortune-teller, whom the servants had invited within the walls, in order to expound to them the fate which presided over their future days.

"Have you any faith in the ability of persons who profess themselves possessed of the powers of second sight, mother?" inquired David of the countess.

Lady Glenalpine replied—"that many instances of the kind were said to have been known in Scotland, but that opinions were divided in the belief."

"Wi' due submission, my lady," pronounced Baldrummie, "I think that their existence must be indisputable to every reflective mind, whan we consider that frae

frae sic sources, even powerful monarchs hae received the maist profitable admonitions for the regulations o' their kingdoms. But gin we descend frae these higher authorities, and come down to the common events o' life, I could tell my young lord an incontrovertible instance o' the foresight o' a weird wife that conversed wi' a cousin o' my ain; his name was Simmie M'Kenzie, and as weel as I recollect, it is now about twa-and-sixty years since, as he was yae day crossing a muir——"

At this moment the fortune-teller, emerging from the group by which she was surrounded, moved up to David, and fixing upon him her eyes, with a wild and peculiar expression, said—"I should like weel to tell that young lord's fortune."

"Why so, good woman?" asked the countess.

"Because my counsel may be o' service to him hereafter," replied the fortune-teller; "and naething shall withhold me frae

frae giving it to him." And having thus spoken, with knitted brow and starting eye, she advanced still nearer to the youth, and, in a hollow tone of voice, pronounced the following uncouth and incomprehensible lines—

"Where thrice three bolts unite, beware!
For there is spun the tangled snare:
Wide o'er fate's book your doom is spread—
Your heart must save your brother's head."

The countess, smiling, presented the woman with a gratuity, in the hope of receiving which, she doubted not that she had exerted her eloquence. Baldrummie listened to her with fixed attention and solemnity of countenance; and David appeared agitated, and even depressed, by the concluding part of her address respecting his brother.

As the countess, her son, and the steward, had been standing at some distance from the servants, when the fortune-teller had moved up to them, her words were not heard by any person but themselves.

As they were on the point of quitting the courtyard, Robert, just returned from an excursion to the sea-shore, joined them, and learning what had been passing, laughingly asked if he might not have his fortune told too?

The fortune-teller overheard his question, and immediately answered—"I hae naething to say to you, young gentleman; yer fate is included in the admonition I hae just given te yer brither;" and with those words she returned to the group with which she had before been engaged.

On entering the castle, the countess and her sons proceeded to an apartment, and Baldrummie quitted them. Perceiving the impression which the words of the fortune-teller had made upon the mind of David, the countess endeavoured to ridicule the idea of placing any faith on the prediction of a poor individual, who could only be supposed to be actuated in what she did by the hope of a pecuniary reward, and to laugh David out of the reflective

flective mood into which his feeble spirits had been thrown by her address.

Robert, though so much younger, appeared to be far more steeled against the powers of sorcery.—"You do not hear our mother," he said, addressing David, "who is a lady, and who has had a good education, pretend to any knowledge of the kind; and how should that poor woman, who must have enjoyed infinitely less advantages, know more than she does? It must be all nonsense, and only done to get money by—I am sure it must."

Little more was said upon the subject, and in the course of a few weeks, the fortune-teller and her prediction seemed to have died away from the recollection of all. But upon the disappearance of sir Robert Dundonald, of which circumstance our readers have already been apprised by the lips of Nicholas Baldrummie, although nearly nine years had elapsed since the fortune-teller had delivered her prophecy, it was instantly revived in the

minds of all who possessed a knowledge of the transaction, and his absence almost supposed to be the commencement of some event which might fulfil the hitherto-derided prediction.

The agony communicated to the heart of the countess by the loss of her son, was of a nature unutterable—inconsolable. Her health, which had been latterly declining, sunk under the shock, and a period of eighteen months carried her to the grave, the victim of maternal affection.

The earl still survived, but the poignancy of his feelings wasted his strength, and enervated his mental powers. He bewailed the loss of his brother; he passed sleepless nights, and anxious days, in endeavouring to account for his disappearance, and develop his fate; and he wept the death of his mother as the heaviest privation with which the hand of fate could at that moment have afflicted him. But grief was not the only torturing sensation which affected his feelings; to every mind

suspense

suspense and mystery are keen tormentors; more particularly so to a heart of susceptibility and nervous solicitude, such as was the earl's; and as the disappearance of his brother and the recollection of the fortune-teller's prophecy met in his brain, accompanied by ever-varying and undigested ideas, his nature frequently almost sunk beneath the contending and undefinable sensations with which his soul was racked.

Upon the death of the countess, all who loved the earl trembled for his life also; they apprehended that his existence might fade under the accumulation of his sorrows; but the hand of Heaven appeared to sustain him, and he had, in an unexpected manner, conducted himself through all the ceremonies attendant on her death, when seized with the sudden emotion by which we have seen him overpowered in the Abbot's chapel on the morning subsequent to the funeral of his lamented parent. The remainder of that day was

passed by him in solitude, in prayer, and in reflection.

Late in the evening, Baldrummie was called upon to attend him. Since the loss of his brother, the old steward was the only person who, exclusively of his mother, had ever shared his confidence. The gentleness of Glenalpine's heart rendered him susceptible of the feelings with which the old man was animated towards himself and his relatives; and he experienced a satisfaction in considering him rather as a friend than a domestic.—"How fares it wi' ye now, my dear lord?" asked the steward tenderly, as he entered the apartment.

"I think," replied the earl, "that I feel somewhat more composed in mind than I did a few hours ago, although not less anxious. Sit down—I have something of importance which I wish to ask of you; pray repeat to me the traditional account of the spirit which was in former days reported to protect my family; I have again

and

and again heard the account rehearsed; but I have just now a particular reason for wishing to receive it once more from your lips."

It was a subject upon which Baldrummie loved to speak, and he immediately complied, by delivering a diffuse and circumstantial account of the guardian spirit enveloped in the brilliant cloud, and of the soft and melodious music by which tradition recorded it to be accompanied.

The earl appeared considerably agitated during the recital, and when it was concluded, he said—"Is it not also affirmed that this mysterious being, on its visits to the earth, is never either visible or audible to any one except the immediate head of the Glenalpine family?"

Baldrummie confirmed the idea, and the earl proceeded thus—"You cannot be surprised at the emotion which I this morning betrayed in the chapel when I in confidence inform you, that I at that moment beheld the similitude of the very

being you have just been describing; my attention was attracted by the softest music, and on raising my eyes to the spot from whence it proceeded, I beheld the brilliant cloud, which gradually unfolding, displayed to my view the benign countenance of a lovely cherub; it smiled graciously upon me, and lifting its eyes to heaven, with an expression which appeared to instruct me there to place my hope, it vanished from my sight."

"Oh! blessed, thrice blessed be the benignity o' the power by which it was commissioned to yer sight!" exclaimed Baldrummie; "it was, nae doubt, permitted to ye as an unequivocal evidence that ye enjoy the favour o' a pitying Omnipotence."

The earl himself coincided in opinion with his steward. The event, he said, although it had affected him with a momentary alarm, had, upon reflection, communicated relief to his mind. It had led him to believe, that whatever the fate of his

his brother, he was not disregarded by the eye of Providence; and that if there were any truth hereafter to be fulfilled in correspondence with the fortune-teller's prediction, that the appearance which he had that morning beheld, seemed to signify that the support of Heaven would be granted him in any extremity to which the will of fate might be preparing to expose him.

A considerable time was passed by the earl in conversation with his humble friend; and Baldrummie rejoiced in heart to perceive that the spirits of his master appeared to have received a slight alleviation from the heavy weight of sorrow by which they had so long been oppressed.

When they parted for the night, Glenalpine enjoined Nicholas not to repeat the subject of their conference to a single individual; and Nicholas, to whom Glenalpine's will was law, readily promised implicit obedience to his wish.

CHAPTER III.

On the following morning, Kenneth expressing a wish to gain a knowledge of the country by which the castle was surrounded, Baldrummie appointed one of the domestics to attend him; and the gamekeeper throwing his gun across his shoulder, they set out.

As they proceeded.—"Ye'r na acquaint wi' these parts, I reckon," said Kenneth's companion, Charlie M'Crae.

"No, indeed, I am not," was the reply.

"I should amaist think ye was na o' this country ava," rejoined Charlie.

"Oh yes, but I am," answered Kenneth; "what makes you doubt it?"

"Because I'm seeing," returned Charlie, "that ye ha' na the accent o' this country, no the least, i' yer speach."

"I was

"I was born in Airshire," replied Kenneth, "the dialect of which country is very different from yours; my mother was a lowlandwoman, who had married a highlander; and my father dying when I was very young, I was brought up principally with my mother, and learnt to speak as she did." And appearing to wish to give a turn to the conversation, he immediately said—"Your steward, Mr. Baldrummie's niece, is a remarkably-fine girl."

"Aye she is a' that," returned Charlie; "unco bonny, and a very guid person as weel."

"I wonder to see so handsome a young woman unmarried," rejoined Kenneth; "it must be her own choice, I think, to remain single."

"I dare say it is," said Charlie; "what guid is there in wedlock, as the auld wives say, till the right man comes?"

"Very true," answered Kenneth, "if her affections are engaged, as you seem to imply—that is what you mean, is not it?"

"Aye," answered Charlie, with a significant smile, and shake of the head.

"Whoever he is that possesses her heart, he must be a happy man," returned Kenneth M'Koul.

"It's hard to say what he is the now, puir chield," rejoined Charlie.

"Why so? who is he?" asked the gamekeeper.

Charlie still smiled, but did not reply, and Kenneth repeated his question.—"I dare say," answered Charlie, "ye'll hae heard that ale-sellers should na be tale-tellers; and I think as weel, that guid servants should na tell tales out o' the house they bide in."

"If you have been ordered to keep it a secret," returned Kenneth, "that alters the case."

"Oh! I was never tell'd ought about it," cried Charlie; "for I dinna even rightly ken whether there be ony truth i' the story ata'."—Kenneth now smiled in his turn, and Charlie continued—"I dinna

na suppose there can be much harm in divulging what I was never tell'd to keep secret. Why it was thought by many that Meestress Robina had stolen awa the heart o' young sir Robert Dundonald, the earl's brither; but whether it was true or fause, I canna tak upon me to declare; but it lookit unco like it by the lamentations she made about him at his disappearance; but it's unfair judging—it might be only out o' respect to the late countess, his mither, wha had been as kind till her for mony years past, as if she had been a bairn o' her ain. Ye'll shurely hae heard o' the sair misfortune that befel Balquither Castle i' the loss o' sir Robert?" added Charlie, after a momentary pause.

Kenneth returned an equivocal answer, to which he subjoined a half-expressed wish to hear the account circumstantially detailed. Charlie immediately complied with his request, and gave a full relation of the mysterious occurrence, which corresponded in every particular with the narrative

narrative which he had received from Nicholas Baldrummie.

A chasm in their conversation now took place, and the gamekeeper employed a considerable time in searching for haunts and covers, where he imagined the fox and moor-hen might lie concealed.

The circuit in which their walk had been taken ultimately brought them to the spot where, in rude and picturesque grandeur, stood the ruins of the monastery of St. Cyrus, at the base of the rock upon the summit of which the Abbot's chapel reared its proud head. After gazing for a few moments at a spiral window, of which the stonework still appeared entire, and which was supported between a double range of pillars, that had together formed the eastern extremity of the building, Kenneth cast himself for repose upon a fragment of the fallen stone, and Charlie, leaning his back against a similar place of support, began some observations upon the decayed state of the structure, to which

which Kenneth appeared to pay little attention; and after the lapse of a short period, as if utterly unconscious that Charlie had been speaking, he turned his head towards him, and said—"I suppose Robina was brought up in the castle from a child by her uncle and aunt Baldrummie; and that the late countess was attached to her on account of having known her from her infancy?"

"Eh, no," answered Charlie M'Crae, "the occasion o' her coming to reside under the protection o' her uncle Baldrummie arose frae a very sad affair, nae less than an awfu' robbery and murder that was committed on her twa parents, wha resided at the time o' the fearfu' transaction at a lane house on a bonny estate o' their ain, at nae muckle distance frae the linn o' Mackarsey, whare ye maun hae heard speak o' the extraordinary cascade i' the county o' Perth."

Kenneth employed himself in cleaning the muzzle of his piece, and Charlie proceeded.

ceeded thus—"As I've heard the account delivered, it was yae eenin about the glomin i' the early spring o' the year, that a loud chap at the gate caused the guid man, Robina's feyther, to rise and open it, and there he fund a weary traveller, wha said that he had lost his gait wi' journeying till a place they ca' Errol, situate i' the Carse o' Gowry. Weel, the stranger prayed a shelter for the night, and Robina's feyther, wha, they say, had as kindly a heart as ever warmed the breast o' man, bade him enter, and invited him to——"

"Weel, maister Kenneth," exclaimed a voice at this moment, "what matter o' diversion, think ye, is this airt o' our county capable o' affording the sportsman?"

The voice was that of Baldrummie, who had descended into the valley with one of the masons employed in some repairs which were making on the outside of the chapel, in search of a stone which might correspond with one of the ancient hewn ornaments

ornaments of the edifice, which time, and the weather, had jointly tended to injure, and which its possessor was anxious to have restored to its pristine appearance, in the most artful manner by which the defect could be replaced.

At the sound of the voice, Kenneth started, and raised his eyes from his gun towards the speaker; and Charlie, interrupted in his narrative by the presence of the steward, moved away towards the castle.

Baldrummie and the gamekeeper now entered into a mixed conversation, sometimes relative to the surrounding country and the sports of the field, and sometimes to the repairs which were making at the chapel, till the bell at the castle, which announced the approach of the dinner hour, sounding, they together moved on towards its walls.

Some days passed unmarked by any occurrence, except that the earl was persuaded by Baldrummie occasionally to take

take the air in a morning in the gardens of the castle, and that those who felt interested in his welfare flattered themselves with the belief that they beheld some trivial amendment in his health and spirits.

On one of these mornings, Glenalpine, for the first time, saw Kenneth, and conversed with him for nearly half an hour on the duties of his office.

When Kenneth had quitted the apartment—"I cannot, from appearance, judge," said the earl to Baldrummie, "how competent that man may prove for filling the situation which he comes to hold; but although of a tolerably-handsome person, there is something in his countenance which I cannot contemplate with pleasure."

"Ye ken, my lord," replied Baldrummie, "that ye never had pleasure i' strangers; ye aye like best the auld faces that ye hae been lang used to; but men maun be strangers till each ither before they can become acquaint."

"It

"It is very true," answered the earl, "and I dare say that the indulgence of certain feelings, which I find it impossible to repress, renders me fastidious in the prejudices which I conceive for my fellow-beings."

In the afternoon of the same day the earl requested, for the first time since the death of his mother, to see Robina. She possessed a sweet, but uncultivated voice, to which she was accustomed to accompany herself upon the lute, and her simple strains had repeatedly caused him the greatest pleasure. In compliance with his request, her uncle accompanied her to his apartment, and according to the instructions of Baldrummie, she bore her lute in her hand.

Her first performance was selected by the earl himself. It was a Highland ballad, which had been a favourite of his mother's, and appeared vividly to recall her recollection to his memory. Before the conclusion of the first stanza the tears stole down

down his cheeks, but he compelled himself to hear it to the end; and when it was concluded, and Robina would have withdrawn, he solicited her to resume her seat. —"These feelings," he said, "must be conquered, and I implore you to indulge me by proceeding." His wish was obeyed. After a time, the music appeared to calm and even to delight him; and when Robina had at length retired, he informed Baldrummie that his feelings had been lulled by her exertions into something like composure, which he had not lately been accustomed to feel.

On this evening the earl omitted his usual custom of reading, and detained his steward with him in conversation till the arrival of his usual hour of prayer; and after he had been attended in his closet by father Celestine, as was his usual custom before retiring to rest, he proceeded to his chamber, entered his bed, and dismissed his attendant.

In the dead of the night, Aleck Ferguson,

son, of whom we have already spoken as the earl's confidential servant, and who slept in an apartment adjoining to his, was awakened by a summons to his master's chamber. He immediately sprung from his bed, hurried on his clothes, and snatching up a lamp which was regularly burnt by night in the chimney of his apartment, he hastened to the earl. He found him sitting up in his bed, and perceived an unusual agitation visible on his countenance. —"Aleck," said Glenalpine, his voice rendered scarcely articulate by the palpitation, as it appeared, of his heart, "go and call up Nicholas Baldrummie, and tell him to come to me instantly; lose not a moment in executing my command." Ferguson lighted a lamp which was standing on a table in the earl's apartment, and proceeded to execute his commission.

Baldrummie was surprised and alarmed at the summons he had received, but used every speed in obeying it. He found the earl still sitting up in his bed, with one of his

his hands clasped to his forehead. Baldrummie approaching him, anxiously inquired whether sudden illness was the cause of the unexpected message he had sent to him? and the earl, having directed Aleck to retire to his own chamber, spoke thus.—"To you, Baldrummie," he said, "I need not explain the weakness of my nerves; to you, therefore, I do not blush to confess, that it is a dream which has disturbed my feelings. It was not long after I had last night entered my bed (for it is now morning—the bell has just sounded the second hour), that I fell into a profound sleep; how long I had slept I know not, when I dreamt that I was wandering amongst the ruins of the monastery of St. Cyrus, and suddenly turning a projecting angle, I beheld a ruffian, of a most terrific and savage appearance, in the act of striking a dagger to the heart of your niece. The horror with which I was affected at the sight awoke me; a few moments convinced me that my

my alarm had been created by a dream, and I shortly composed myself again to sleep. Again I found myself amidst the ruins, and observed Robina pursued by the same ruffian, and flying towards me with extended arms, as if to supplicate my assistance. I endeavoured to approach her, but, with a sensation which I have often found to accompany dreams, I felt myself unable to quit the spot. Her pursuer overtook her, and seized her in his arms; Robina uttered a dismal shriek, and at the supposed shriek I again awoke. Still convinced that I had been dreaming, I endeavoured to banish the unpleasant vision from my thoughts, and succeeded in lulling myself a third time to sleep. Once more I dreamt. I now believed myself stationed on the edge of the Black Height; and on looking down, amidst the ruins beneath, I still saw Robina struggling with the ruffian, and believed that her eyes were raised in supplication to me. At the same instant the voice of an invisible speaker addressed

dressed me—'Fly, Glenalpine,' it said, 'and preserve Robina! it is you alone who can save her life!' and again I awoke.

"These repeated dreams upon the same subject," continued the earl, "have made so strong an impression on my mind, that I cannot be satisfied unless persons are immediately sent out to search the ruins; as the manner in which my dreams affected me, appears to imply that, if they have any reference at all, they refer to the present hour."

"Yer orders, my lord, shall instantly be obeyed," replied Baldrummie; "and a thousand times do I thank ye for the interest which ye tak i' the puir lassie wham I sae tenderly love: but I trust and hope that ye will find that a fevered imagination has alane produced this alarm."

"I believe it to be more," returned the earl, "and I cannot be easy unless you and Ferguson immediately arm yourselves, and proceed towards the spot."

"But my guid lord," returned Baldrummie,

drummie, "were it nae better, think ye, that I should just gang to the chamber o' my niece, and gin I find her there weel and sleeping, and truly I dinna expect to find her elsewhere at this hour o' the morning, there will be nae occasion to tak the step which ye propose."

The earl acquiesced in his opinion, and the old steward proceeded to his niece's room:—he knocked at the door; no answer was returned;—he repeated his request for admission, but silence still prevailed within the apartment: he accordingly entered, and to his surprise and horror, found that Robina was not in bed, nor did the bed appear to have been occupied that night.

Trembling with apprehension, Beldrummie hurried back to the chamber of the earl, and accepted the offer of Aleck Ferguson accompanying him to the ruins of the monastery. Aleck was accordingly called into his lord's apartment, and the business in agitation having in a few words

been explained to him, they each armed themselves with a brace of pistols; in addition to which, Aleck girt on his sword, and they set out.

A narrow defile at the foot of the rock formed a nearer way to the ruins than the path which led across the Black Height, and this they resolved to pursue. It was a remarkably-bright moonlight morning, the planet of borrowed light shining in meridian splendour, without a passing cloud to shade its brilliancy. Proceeding onwards, they arrived at the dilapidated edifice, without encountering or descrying a single individual. Ascending a fragment of the stonework, they gazed around; no sound was to be heard; no form met their eye. After a few minutes, Aleck, grasping the arm of his companion to arrest his attention, pointed with a finger of his other hand towards the shaft of a broken pillar, from above which appeared the bust of a human form, which seemed to be supporting its head upon its rested arm.

In

In whispers they immediately agreed to steal towards the spot, and endeavour to ascertain who the person was, and what the motive of his being stationed where they beheld him. Moving cautiously between the various masses of stone which lay scattered about, in order to prevent their approach being anticipated, they continued for some minutes to advance, when a shriek, at no considerable distance, attracted their attention. It appeared to be that of a female, and was immediately followed by some indistinct accents in the rough voice of a man.

Aleck instantly sprung upon a clump of stone, and cast his eyes around in search of the beings whom he had heard; the trembling Baldrummie instinctively followed his example; and he had no sooner placed himself by the side of his companion, than they beheld a man, who was forcibly dragging forward a struggling female by the arm.—"By a' the holy saints," exclaimed Baldrummie, "it is

my niece! it is Robina! Let us flee, and save her frae danger, perhaps frae death!"

Aleck instantly fired one of his pistols in the air.

"For why hae ye done that?" asked Baldrummie.

Aleck replied, that he had done so in the hope that the signal it must convey to the villain who held Robina, of the approach of human beings, might deter him from effecting any base purpose before they could reach the spot. Baldrummie applauded his foresight, and they ran forward.

As they proceeded, Aleck suddenly perceived a man passing hastily along a narrow path at the extremity of the rock, which led from the foot of the Black Height to the entrance of a deep forest, extending for a considerable distance into the heart of the country. At the moment Aleck descried him, the light of the moon fell full upon his person, and he, beyond all

all doubt, recognized him to be the gamekeeper, Kenneth M'Koul. Hastily he communicated his discovery to his companion.

"Can it," exclaimed Baldrummie, "be he wha—but it maun; it canna be guid that brings him here at this hour o' the morning—fire upon him, Aleck, fire upon him."

Aleck instantly obeyed, by discharging his second pistol, although he apprehended that Kenneth was at too great a distance to be annoyed by his fire; and when the smoke produced by the explosion of his piece had died away, Kenneth was nowhere to be seen. Again they moved on towards the spot where they had beheld Robina; in a few minutes they reached it. The first object which struck their sight was a deep grave, newly dug; in the earth by its side stuck a spade, and near this lay a gun, which Aleck taking up, and examining, without hesitation pronounced to be the gamekeeper's.

Whilst occupied in contemplating these objects, a faint groan sounded on their ears. They turned towards the spot from whence it had proceeded, and beneath a fragment of one of the dilapidated walls of the ruined edifice, by the shadow of which she had hitherto been concealed from their view, they discovered Robina extended on the earth.

"Oh, my Robina! my child! my Robina!" exclaimed the old steward, "what brought ye here at this hour?—Pray Heaven I be not come too late to save ye!—Oh, speak, my child, and ease my heart!"

On raising her from the ground, they found her to be in a state of insensibility, and perceived that her arm was bleeding profusely from a wound which she had received below the shoulder. Their first care was to endeavour to staunch the blood, which they, after some time, contrived to effect, by applying to it such bandages as they could rend from their own apparel;

apparel; and having done this, Aleck, giving the gamekeeper's gun, and the spade, which he considered it necessary that they should carefully preserve, as evidences of his guilt, into the charge of Baldrummie, he placed the still-senseless Robina across his arms, and began to retrace his way to the castle.

They had scarcely passed the Abbot's chapel, ere they were met by several domestics of the castle, whom the earl, apprehensive for their safety, had aroused from their beds, and sent in quest of them; and Aleck briefly stating to them the extraordinary circumstances of which they had been witness, and explaining the road which he had seen the gamekeeper take, urged them to make all possible haste in pursuing him.

CHAPTER IV.

ROBINA was conveyed to her chamber, and her aunt and the females of the castle summoned to attend her, by whom she was immediately placed in her bed, and every means used to restore her to animation. A considerable time elapsed before the desired end could be accomplished, and when she once more opened her eyes, gazing around with a wild and vacant expression of countenance, she burst into a violent flood of tears, as if to banish the sight of objects. Father Celestine, who, in addition to his holy function, was also the practiser of medicine and surgery in the castle, now approached to examine her arm. The wound was found to be deep and dangerous; styptics and balsamics were applied to it; and under the pain which was occasioned

casioned by the operation, Robina again fainted. Several hours now elapsed before she appeared to gain the slightest degree of recollection, or to be sensible where she was. The questions addressed to her by her friends were unreplied and unattended to by her, and the only signs of her existence were the faint sighs of pain which were occasionally murmured between her lips.

The occurrence of the morning excited the liveliest astonishment in the breasts of all who were acquainted with the transaction. What motives could have tempted Kenneth M'Koul to meditate the murder of Robina, with whom he had only been slightly acquainted for the space of a few days? and what consideration or persuasion could have induced a young woman, of the exemplary modesty and discretion of Robina, to have consented to meet a stranger upon a lonely spot at so extraordinary an hour? It was a mystery past the powers of human solution.

The agony occasioned by her wound, added to the mental agitation under which Robina was suffering, produced a violent fever in her brain, and at the expiration of twenty-four hours, her senses became wild and disordered. Thus she continued for nearly fifteen days, and when a lucid interval was enjoyed by her, she still appeared insensible to any questions which were advanced to her, or unwilling to reply to them; for unbroken silence sealed her lips, except at those moments when her sufferings caused her imagination to wander, and her expressions were then too incoherent, and too much unconnected, for any information to be drawn from them.

Unabated inquiries had meanwhile been making through the country for Kenneth, and large rewards offered for his apprehension; but every measure pursued for his discovery proved fruitless, no person answering his description having been either seen or heard of. The earl himself was not less affected with wonder at the inexplicable

inexplicable transaction, than with mutual satisfaction and delight at having been the means of preserving Robina's life—"It was the agency of Heaven," he said, "which instructed me to work her salvation, and I cannot express myself sufficiently grateful to Omnipotence, for having been thought worthy of being made the instrument of its benignity." And when conversing with Baldrummie, he would frequently recur to the prejudice which he had at first sight taken against the gamekeeper's countenance, and smiling, ask the old man, "if he did not almost begin to think him a prophet?"

On the seventeenth day after the memorable morning on which Robina had received her wound, the earl was, at the desire of her aunt, admitted to see her. Before his entrance into her chamber, she had manifested a greater degree of composure than she had yet done; but upon beholding him, a violent trembling seized her frame, her countenance became alarm-

ingly agitated, and she turned hastily round upon the couch upon which she was extended, as if to avoid beholding him. He accordingly retired from the apartment, and when he was gone, Robina burst into a flood of tears, in which she for a considerable time indulged, and which were succeeded by an utter exhaustion of strength, in which she again appeared to lose all sense of recollection.

On quitting the chamber of Robina, the earl, accompanied by Baldrummie, proceeded to the gardens of the castle, where he had wandered only a short time, when he heard a shrill blast blown from the horn at the castle-gate, and in the course of a few minutes Alexander Ferguson appearing, brought him intelligence that there was a troop of horsemen, armed with staves, to the number of about ten, at the castle-gate, headed by a man of respectable appearance who announced himself as captain Gordon, and requested an audience of the earl. The name was one

with

with which Glenalpine was not acquainted, and at a loss to divine the meaning of so extraordinary a circumstance, he sent Baldrummie to reply—"that he was in a state of ill-health which rendered it inconvenient for him to receive the visits of strangers, and to request that he would communicate his business to the bearer of the message."

Baldrummie obeyed; and on advancing towards the strangers, he perceived that they were all well mounted, especially the one who denominated himself captain Gordon; he was also handsomely habited, and his countenance was prepossessing. The stavesmen, who were evidently his servants, all appeared in a similar dress, which bore a resemblance to that worn by the captain, but of an evidently inferior quality and fashion.

After having listened attentively to Baldrummie's message, captain Gordon replied—"that he had the honour to fill the station of principal officer of justice in Edinburgh,

Edinburgh, and that he was commissioned, together with his men, by the lord provost of that city, to search Balquitther Castle, for the person of a daring and notorious offender, who, intelligence had been conveyed to them, was living in disguise within its walls:" and he concluded with saying, "that by virtue of his authority he must command the gates of the castle to be kept closed until their search had taken place, in order to prevent the escape of the criminal." And having thus addressed Baldrummie, he turned to his men, and directing them to take charge of the gate in the king's name, four of them dismounted, and closing and bolting the portal, placed themselves sentry over the entrance to the courtyard.

Baldrummie hastened back to the earl with intelligence of what was passing; and, Glenalpine, not a little astonished at what he heard, repaired to an apartment, and directed captain Gordon to be conducted to him. On the entrance of the captain, the

the earl instantly perceived him to be a man of courteous and gentlemanly manners; and the captain immediately repeated the cause of his arrival at the castle.

The earl replied—"that he was utterly at a loss to guess to what individual of his household it could be that he alluded."

"The man to whom I refer," said captain Gordon, "has probably so far insinuated himself into your favour, by the assumption of a conduct foreign to his nature, for he is well skilled in the arts of imposition, that you have not suspected him to be the character he really is."

The earl begged him to be explicit, and captain Gordon answered—"The person, my lord, whom we seek, is the gamekeeper who lately entered into your service, and you may be truly thankful that he has been discovered in his iniquity, as he must have had some design of an infamous nature to answer in having done so. The man, my lord, whom you consider to be no more than Kenneth M'Koul, your gamekeeper,

gamekeeper, is no other than the far-famed and notorious Fergus Dunbeith, the Perthshire outlaw and robber."

The earl sunk upon a chair, and requested captain Gordon to take a seat by his side till he could sufficiently compose his mind for recounting to him the extraordinary circumstances which had taken place in the castle since the period of the pretended Kenneth's first becoming a member of his household; only premising, that in consequence of a crime which he had committed, and which he would shortly detail to him, he had long since fled the castle, and no traces of his course had yet been discovered.

Captain Gordon expressed the liveliest regret at the disappointment of his hopes, on finding that the object of his search was fled, and sent an order to his men to undraw the bolts of the castle-gates.

When the earl had recounted the circumstance which had caused the disappearance of Kenneth from Balquither Castle,

Castle, captain Gordon expressed equal astonishment at the mysterious circumstance, as every one to whom it was known had already done.—"He should have supposed," he said, "that his motive for introducing himself into the castle, must have been either that of private plunder, or of admitting his gang, at some apt opportunity, within the edifice, to despoil it of such valuables as they could arrest into their possession. What benefit could he have derived from the murder of an innocent and unoffending female? His conduct appeared rather as an act of insanity than of villany."

As they continued to converse, captain Gordon informed the earl, who was but slightly acquainted with the existence of such a character as Fergus Dunbeith, that the robber who bore that name had been a gentleman of a dissolute and rapacious mind, who having expended a rich income in extravagant pleasures, had applied, through the means of friends, to the late king,

king, for a situation under government to repair his broken fortunes; which the monarch, on learning the cause of his necessities, sternly refused to grant him, alleging, "that a man who could not take care of what was his own, was not fit to be entrusted with any charge of a public nature."

At this reply Fergus had been so incensed, that he had immediately formed the desperate resolution of becoming a freebooter, and obtaining by force and extortion the means of existence, for which he was too proud and too idle to labour.—"Whether upon this determination he himself became the former of a lawless band, or whether he connected himself, and such of his associates as he had seduced to join in his cause, with any other characters of a similar nature, has never been accurately ascertained," continued captain Gordon; "but Dunbeith and his iniquitous comrades have, for some years past, been the terror of many counties, in particular those of Kincardine and Perth, and their haunt

haunt has in vain been endeavoured to be discovered. It has, according to report, frequently been changed; sometimes it was supposed to be held in the craigs of Kinnoul, in an excavation of the earth, famous for having concealed the valiant Wallace; at others, in the cave of Den Fennel in Kincardineshire; and they have also been said to inhabit a spot called the Devil's Cave, upon the coast of this county of Fife. In their own holds, it is almost impossible for any force to attack them with a prospect of success, as they never fix themselves in any place, where they have not been able to contrive concealed outlets, by which they may preserve themselves in the hour of danger. Had we met with Fergus here in his fictitious character, it had been a lucky chance for Scotland, which may never occur again." Captain Gordon then inquired of the earl, "whether during Dunbeith's residence in his family, he had ever perceived in him any disposition to plunder, or an attempt to introduce any of his

his companions into the castle?" to which inquiries the earl replied—"that he believed he might decidedly answer in the negative."

"It appears equally extraordinary to me," observed captain Gordon, "what could have been his purpose for introducing himself at all within these walls, as why he had meditated the unprovoked murder which drove him from them."

The earl said—"that the subject had occupied his thoughts by day and night, and that the more he reflected on the unparelleled occurrence, the more he was perplexed to find a cause for its having existed."

The earl found in captain Gordon a pleasing and well-informed companion, and the hour at which the midday repast was served approaching, requested that he would not leave his castle unrefreshed, an invitation which Gordon accepted, and the earl gave orders for his men to be regaled in the hall of the castle.

When their meal was concluded, and the

the servants had retired from the apartment, the earl, addressing captain Gordon, said—"I am very happy in the opportunity of becoming thus personally acquainted with you, as from the situation which you have informed me you hold, you may probably be more able than any person with whom I have yet conversed, to give me advice upon a subject in which my heart is deeply interested."

Captain Gordon said—"that his services were obediently at his command, and begged him to speak freely."

"You are, doubtless, acquainted," rejoined the earl, "with the extraordinary circumstance of my brother Robert's disappearance, which has now for twenty months past received no elucidation?" Captain Gordon replied in the affirmative, and Glenalpine proceeded thus—"I earnestly wish your opinion whether you consider that any means could be employed for the discovery of his fate, with

greater

greater hope of success than those which have already been resorted to?"

"I think," answered captain Gordon, "that you have already offered five thousand pounds for any information respecting him?"

"I have," replied Glenalpine; "but twice, thrice, nay ten times that sum should not be valued if it could restore him to my sight."

"I wish sincerely," returned captain Gordon, "that the affair had originally been committed to my guidance, and the promised reward vested in my hands."

"Have you then," ejaculated the earl, "a suspicion of any individual who——"

"No, no, my lord, none," Gordon interrupted him by saying; "but men in my capacity, who are obliged to hold converse with beings from every rank of life, and who have an opportunity of seizing upon occasions which are not presented to the observation of characters abstracted from the

the busy world, like yourself, are the only persons who are capable of conducting matters of this nature."

The earl became buried in reflection, and a short pause ensued, which Gordon broke by saying—"One material point in a case of this nature is, that the informer be made to feel secure that he shall not be himself inveigled into punishment; and to this end it is necessary that the reward should be ready to place in his hand the moment he makes the disclosure."

"If," returned the earl, "but the shadow of a chance would be supposed to hang upon any exertion which you might be induced to make in this business, so nearly connected with my happiness and peace of mind, I should be more than willing to reward you in the most liberal manner for your services to that effect."

"It is not less my duty than my inclination to use every endeavour within the limits of my ability to serve you, my lord," replied captain Gordon; "I am the servant

of

of the public, and feel a satisfaction in rendering myself useful in my station."

Much more conversation on the subject ensued between them; and it was ultimately determined that Gordon should be provided by the earl with money for a second time publishing through Scotland, the reward which he offered for intelligence of his brother; and an arrangement to that effect being made between them, the earl furnished him with a draft on his banker in Edinburgh for five thousand pounds, and a second for one thousand, which he desired him to apply in whatever manner he considered it best to pursue for the apprehension of Dunbeith; and for which two sums, the captain gave him his receipt, by the name of John M'Kenzie Gordon, chief officer of justice, at the tolbooth in Edinburgh; and it was also agreed that the captain should send a messenger weekly to Balquitther Castle, with intelligence whether any prospect of success beamed on his exertions.

Glenalpine

Glenalpine pressed Gordon to remain at his castle that night, but he declined the invitation, saying—"that the duty of his office required his return as quickly as possible to the city;" and at his departure, the earl himself conducted him to the castle-gate, and presented him with a sword of the richest workmanship, which he requested him to wear for his sake.

The days now rolled on unmarked by events, except that Robina had relapsed into a second illness, as alarming in its symptoms as that from which she had partially recovered; and her friends observed with afflicted hearts that a melancholy madness seemed to pervade her senses.

With mingled hope and anxiety, the earl looked forward to the period at which he expected to receive the promised intelligence from captain Gordon; but a fortnight elapsed without the arrival of any messenger; and as the third week drew towards a close, and no information was received, his impatience became so

great, that he resolved to send Nicholas Baldrummie to Edinburgh, with an especial order in writing to captain Gordon, authorising him to commune with his steward with the same freedom that he would do with himself.

Consequently, on the day appointed for his journey, Baldrummie set out on horseback for the capital, attended by one of the earl's grooms; and on arriving at the spot of his destination, he scarcely gave himself time to refresh ere he proceeded to seek out captain Gordon, according to the address which he had left with the earl. On arriving at the house specified, he was received by a servant, to whom, after he had mentioned that he had business of a particular and private nature with his master, he was conducted into an apartment, where he found a gentleman seated at a writing-table, who immediately rose upon his entrance.

"I beg yer pardon, sir," said Baldrummie,

mie, on perceiving the countenance of a stranger—" I'm surely mista'en."

" Who is it that you wish to see?" inquired the gentleman.

" Captain John M'Kenzie Gordon, sir, ane o' the chief officers o' justice i' this town," was Baldrummie's reply.

" I am that person—I am John M'Kenzie Gordon," was the rejoinder on the part of the stranger.

" But there'll likely be anither o' the same name, sir," returned Baldrummie.

" There is no one either of that name or in that capacity in this city besides myself," was the subsequent answer.

The surprise and dilemma into which Baldrummie was thrown by this unexpected occurrence, for a while tied his tongue. When the power of utterance was regained by him, he briefly related the circumstances which had occasioned his visit to Edinburgh.

Captain Gordon, for such was the person whom Baldrummie had been address-

ing, informed him, "that whoever had visited Balquitther Castle in his name must have been an impostor, and the pretended cause of his mission a fabrication, as no information had ever been received by the officers of justice in Edinburgh of Dunbeith having entered in disguise into the service of the earl of Glenalpine, and consequently no messengers sent in pursuit of him."

The consternation with which Baldrummie was affected by this account, almost deprived him of the powers of action or recollection. He was aroused from his lethargy of thought by captain Gordon recommending to him to proceed to the earl's banker, and inquire whether the drafts, with which the false captain had been furnished by his master, had been presented for cash; and if they had not, to give directions for their being refused payment, and any person by whom they might be tendered, retained in custody.

Baldrummie

Baldrummie followed his instructions without delay, but his caution came too late; the money for both the drafts had been drawn on the day subsequent to that on which the false captain Gordon had visitted Balquitther Castle.

CHAPTER V.

On the return of Baldrummie into Fife-shire, the intelligence which he brought with him proved a severe mortification to the earl; he heeded not the pecuniary loss which he had sustained; all that he regretted was, the utter failure of his highly-raised expectation of gaining some information of his brother's fate, from the channel to which he had entrusted the attempt of unveiling the mystery. His spirits sunk under the disappointment, and a settled melancholy again became the characteristic of his words and actions. By Baldrummie, no doubt was entertained that the false captain Gordon and his retinue had been confederates of Kenneth M'Koul; whether either of them had been

been the noted Dunbeith himself, it was impossible for him to decide.

Another month had passed away, during which the unhappy Robina had made no progress towards convalescence, either in health or mind, when Nicholas Baldrummie received a visit from an old friend, who was a distant relation of Robina's late mother, named Simon Campbell. The old man had once been a small farmer, but since the death of his wife, and the placing out of his children in the world, he had retired from toil; and subsisting on a small independence which his industry had acquired him, passed his time in visits to his friends and relatives.

Campbell expressed the deepest regret at the melancholy state of Robina, whom he loved like one of his own children, and whom, in the days of her childhood, when he had been a neighbour of her deceased parents, it had been one of his greatest pleasures to nurse and to amuse. He said, "that it was not by any means a matter

of surprise to him, that Robina's present sufferings, added to the shock which she had in early life received from the murder of her parents, had made an impression on her mind which had disordered her senses; he was, on the contrary, almost surprised that her existence had not sunk under a repetition of the horrors to which she had been exposed, at the lamentable hour which had been marked by the death of her father and mother."

His observations created a considerable degree of curiosity in the breasts of some of the superior domestics of the castle, who having entered the service of the earl subsequently to the period of Robina becoming a member of his family, had only heard the former events of her life slightly touched upon; and, for their gratification, Campbell related the sorrowful circumstance which had made Robina an orphan, to the following effect:—

He said, as we have already heard from the account of the transaction commenced by

by Charlie M'Crae for the information of Kenneth M'Koul, "that Hugh Stewart and his wife, the deceased parents of Robina, had resided on a small estate of their own near the Linn of Mackarsey, in the county of Perth; to which he added, that he had, for many years previous to the dreadful catastrophe of which he was about to speak, been their near neighbour and constant visitor: that having been accustomed to a life of agriculture, it had been his almost-invariable custom to rise with the dawn of day, and that he had not relinquished the habit after he had ceased from the labours of the field: that one morning in the early spring, having risen at his accustomary hour, he was strolling, for the benefit of air and exercise, in the direction of Stewart's dwelling, when, to his surprise, he perceived Robina, then about twelve years of age, running hastily towards him, and that his astonishment had been increased, when, on her nearer approach, he observed the horror which

marked her countenance, and bursting into tears, heard her frantically exclaim—'that her parents had been murdered.' He accompanied her with all speed to the house, and to his grief and agony, found her words verified by beholding her father and mother weltering lifeless in their blood upon the floor of the chamber where they slept, and where there was evidence of their having been dragged from their beds, for the horrid purpose of depriving them of their existence.

"The only account which the half-distracted Robina was able to give of the transaction was, that on the preceding evening, a stranger, who had professed himself weary with travelling, and likewise to have lost his way, had stopped at the house, and petitioned shelter for the night, which her father had readily and humanely granted him: that after their evening repast had been served, she had retired to rest, and sunk to sleep; in the middle of the night she had been awakened

ed by a violent tumult which prevailed in the house, and on assuming courage to quit her apartment for the purpose of investigating the cause, and running to the chamber of her parents, she perceived her mother already a corpse, and her father struggling with two ruffians, who were assailing him with their drawn swords; whilst several others appeared in various parts of the room, in the act of rifling the chests and other articles which the apartment contained.

"Affected by the terror natural to her situation and age, she fled with precipitancy from the scene of horror, unperceived as she believed by the plunderers, and hid herself under some straw which had been placed to dry in a corner of the kitchen. After some time she heard several persons descend the stairs and quit the house; and believing the depredators to be all gone, she was on the point of quitting her retreat, when other steps

 sounded

sounded on the stairs, and caused her again to withdraw to her concealment.

"In the course of a few minutes two men entered the kitchen, and began to search whether it contained any property with which they considered it worth their while to encumber themselves. The terror of Robina increased with every moment, and she trembled so violently, that her shiverings agitated the straw, and its movements attracted the notice of the men.

'What have we here?' roughly ejaculated one of them, and the other immediately making an opening in the straw, discovered to their view the terrified Robina.

'Oh ho!' exclaimed the man who had before spoken, 'our business is not concluded, I perceive; here is another to dispatch yet.'

"Robina fell upon her knees before them, and with loud shrieks implored their mercy; whilst the ruffian who had pronounced her fate proceeded calmly to draw his sword from the scabbard.

'No,

'No, no!—desist, desist!' said the other, 'don't stain your sword with the blood of a child.'

'Children grow to men and women,' returned the first speaker, 'and dead folks tell no tales;' and with these words he seized the hand of Robina, and pointed his weapon at her breast.

"His companion grasped his arm and drew it back—'You shall not injure her,' he said; 'it is an unnecessary cruelty, and I cannot bear to witness it.'

'Well, well, have your way, if you will,' replied the other; 'it is of very little consequence to us, I believe, whether she lives or dies: but mark me, you shrieking imp,' he added, addressing himself to Robina, 'if you dare to squall again, or attempt to stir from this spot till we are out of sight, by Heaven, I will dash your brains out!' and darting at her a look of ferocity, meant to enforce his threat, they quitted the house; and Robina

bina shortly after heard them mount horses, and ride away at full speed.

"With a heart palpitating not alone with a dread at the menaces which the ruffian had uttered, but also with the apprehension that all his companions might not have departed from the house, it was some time before Robina durst venture to quit the spot where they had left her. At length the unbroken silence which had for a considerable time prevailed, gave her courage to steal forth: she moved to the door by which they had quitted the house, and looking out, perceived that they were no longer in sight; and dreading to ascend to the chamber of her parents, she was running towards the nearest house, to relate the horrible adventure of which she had been a witness, when she was met by Simon Campbell.

"The neighbours of the deceased were quickly assembled to the spot by the rumour of the transaction, and no doubt remained

mained in any breast of the murderers having been members of a gang of daring banditti with which the country round about had been for some years infested, and which was said to be headed by the undaunted Fergus Dunbeith. The wretched fate of Robina's parents met the sympathizing ear of all by whom they were known, for their excellent qualities had endeared them to their friends and neighbours; and tenderly did the matrons of the district lament over their orphan daughter, who was immediately removed from the heart-rending scene, and placed in the family of an acquaintance, where she continued till the remains of her parents had been consigned to the grave; and Simon Campbell then took upon himself her safe conduct to the protection of her uncle and aunt Baldrummie, at Balquitther Castle, where she had ever since resided, not less beloved than pitied, by all to whom her sad tale was known."

Here ended Simon's narrative, in which the

the countenances of his auditors had bespoken them deeply interested during the recital; and when he had ceased speaking, one of them inquired whether a discovery of the murderers had ever taken place? to which Campbell replied in the negative, saying, that as Hugh Stewart and his wife had both fallen their victims, there was no one in existence but Robina who could identify their persons; and that if even the alarm of her feelings at the time at which she had beheld two of the number upon whom the bloody transaction was chargeable, had not deprived her of presence of mind for sufficiently noticing their countenances, to enable her to recognise them at any future period, it appeared very unlikely, as Robina seldom quitted the walls of the edifice in which she had since that period resided, that they ever had or ever would come within her observation.

The recapitulation of past events led the imaginations of Baldrummie, and his old

old friend Simon, back to a remote period of their lives; and conversing on times and persons long gone by, they wandered about the courtyard of the castle, enjoying the salubrious air of a fine spring evening. Whilst thus engaged, the horn at the gate was sounded to request entrance, and they beheld the porter admit a man in a religious habit, and heard him inquire for father Celestine.

It was so unusual for the venerable father to receive any visitors, and the distance so great at which Balquitther Castle stood from any religious house, that of the Black Friars, at St. Andrews, being the nearest, that the circumstance excited their curiosity.

A domestic was sent to convey the message of the monk to the holy father, who shortly after appearing in the courtyard, and approaching the friar, displayed an expression of countenance which bespoke him to behold a stranger.—"Whence

came

came you, reverend friar?" he said, "and what is your business with me?"

"Your first question," replied the stranger, "I cannot immediately reply to —my answer to your second is, that I am come hither to petition that you would shrive me—a request which our mutual profession will not permit you to deny me."

"My son," rejoined father Celestine, "the chapel attached to this domain, in which my confessional is placed, stands at some distance from hence; the shades of night are beginning to veil the earth; and neither your age nor health appear to denote you in need of an immediate acquiescal to your hasty request."

"I entreat then," returned the friar, "a private conversation with you in your own apartment: and by this holy sign I adjure you to grant it to me," he emphatically added, marking his breast with the figure of the cross as he spoke.

"It

"It is," answered father Celestine, "a symbol which teaches me charity for the feelings of all who acknowledge its influence; yours may labour under a burthen from which it may be agony to you not to relieve yourself: in reverence to the glorious sign by which you supplicate me, I grant your suit—follow my steps, holy friar," and leading the way to the stranger, he conducted him to a closet, where the greater part of his hours were passed in solitary and religious meditation.

For nearly three hours they continued together; at the expiration of that time father Celestine came forth, and proceeded to the earl's apartment, requesting to be permitted to converse with him in private: when they were alone, the father spoke thus:—"My beloved son," he said, "there is a person now in my closet, who professes to bring you intelligence of your much-loved and long-regretted brother; I have promised that he shall converse with you, and believe that I may safely vouch for

for his intentions towards yourself and your brother being friendly; more I cannot announce to you, as he has, since his arrival at the castle, made confession to me: and his having done so, places a seal on my lips relative to any confidence which he may have reposed in me."

The sudden and unexpected information affected Glenalpine with an almost overwhelming joy; he requested the stranger to be immediately conducted to his presence; and father Celestine, without delay, retired to lead the unknown friar to the earl's apartment, whom he had previously warned that his interview with the stranger must be unattended by witnesses.

During the absence of father Celestine, the earl clasped his hands in fervent thankfulness towards Heaven, and pronounced a silent prayer of gratitude for the approaching development of his brother's fate, which it had vouchsafed to grant him.

When the friar entered the apartment where

where Glenalpine was impatiently awaiting his presence, he beheld in the stranger a man of about thirty years of age, of an interesting and commanding countenance, and remarkable for a beauty of person closely approaching to feminine loveliness. The friar folded his hands upon his breast, and bowed his head in salutation to Glenalpine. The earl gave him a cordial welcome, and placed him by his side, when the stranger spoke thus:—

"Father Celestine has already recounted to you the outline of the motive by which I have been impelled to visit you; it is now my part to enter into the particulars connected with that motive, and to request your patient hearing of the terms upon which I propose to become the friend of your brother and yourself, by procuring his enlargement from the spot where he is now detained an unwilling and an unjust prisoner."

"Oh, speak then freely," ejaculated the earl,

earl, "and believe that whatever wealth the coffers of Glenalpine can produce to requite your exertions, shall be joyfully made the reward of your services."

"It is not gold which I seek for my recompence," replied the friar; "the first proposal to which I claim your attention is, that you will place implicit confidence in my friendship for your brother and yourself, and consent to be guided by me in every respect and circumstance, without requiring any explanation of my words or actions, till I shall judge it right to grant you such a communication. This proposition forms one-half of my terms. The other condition is this—that when you do behold your brother, you will join your persuasions with mine to induce him to give his hand to his deliverer; for it is by the hand of a woman—a woman who respects and adores him, and by the hand of that woman alone, that his enlargement from his present captivity can ever be effected."

"You

"You speak in riddles, holy father," ejaculated the earl.

"It is at your option to have them presently explained to you," said the friar; "and these," he after a momentary pause added, "are the only terms which I can propose to you for the restoration of your brother to the bosom of his family."

The earl maintained an irresolute silence, during which his countenance bespoke him prepared to enter into any engagement, sooner than lose the benefit of which he might be deprived by refusing to accept the terms proposed; but equally denoting how great the astonishment which he experienced at the nature of the conditions which were submitted to his acceptance.

"From what I have told you," the friar proceeded by saying, "you will naturally conclude that I must be acquainted with the spot where sir Robert Dundonald is concealed, and also with those by whom his liberty is denied him; and judging

judging of me by the generality of mankind, you will suppose that the secret may be tempted from me by promises, or wrung from me by threats; but, by the sacredness of the holy church, I swear, that the information which you desire to possess shall never be obtained by any means but those I have proposed to you. I have already told you that I value not your gold, and should the line of conduct which I have resolved to pursue provoke your anger, and my habit fail to protect me from your wrath, I will sooner die under the vengeance of your disappointment, than swerve from the determination which I have taken."

These words were pronounced with a steady emphasis and an unchanged countenance, which declared the speaker to be possessed of a settled and resolute spirit, whilst the surprise with which his conduct affected Glenalpine rendered him scarcely able to reply, and still more doubtful in what manner it became him to act under the

the present perplexing circumstances. After some moments' hesitation, he spoke thus:—"Were I to agree to act under your guidance, what is the conduct which you would propose to me to pursue?"

"You must promise to obey me, before I can disclose myself farther to you," replied the friar.

"Your terms are so extraordinary," rejoined Glenalpine, "that they require consideration."

"I am willing to grant you time for thought," returned the friar, "only remarking that every hour which you give to unnecessary reflection, is an additional period of suffering to your brother; and adding, that I have dared much to serve you, and that I would sooner forfeit my life than injury should fall upon you, much less upon him."

Their conversation was protracted to a considerable length, but it was only a repetition of what had already passed between them, and is therefore unnecessary

to be detailed. At length the castle bell tolled the midnight hour, and the friar remarking the sound, rose to depart.

"You will not venture forth at this hour of the night?" said the earl.

"I cannot delay another minute to be gone," replied the friar; "I have overstaid my time already, and only grieve that we must part without having come to a conclusion favourable to the future happiness of your brother, for whose restoration to society I had believed before I saw you, from the reports which I had heard of your affection for each other, that you would have adventured any task. Farewell! I cannot forbear repeating my regret that my mission has failed of its desired end."

"It has not failed," eagerly exclaimed Glenalpine, dreading to lose the clue now presented to him for developing the mystery of his brother's fate; "it shall not fail; only tell me when, and where, I may expect to see you again?"

"To-morrow night, at this very hour, amidst

amidst the ruins of the monastery of St. Cyrus," answered the monk; "I will there await your coming; and see that you come alone; implicit obedience to my words can alone ensure you success in the point to which your thoughts and wishes are directed—say, will you come?"

"If Heaven preserve my life until that hour, I will," rejoined Glenalpine.

"And alone—heed that," returned the friar.

"I will obey," said the earl.

"Now then, command me to be conducted to the gate," returned the friar; "I mentioned already that I had been here too long; for your own sake do not throw in my way any obstacle to cause me to increase my error."

The earl led him into the hall of the castle, and with a silent inclination of his head at parting, he then followed the servant commissioned to attend him to the gate.

The earl passed a sleepless night in re-

flection on the extraordinary visit which he had received; but he arose resolutely determined to comply with the invitation of the stranger, to which acquiescence he felt himself compelled by a triple consideration: in the first instance, by his excessive desire to leave no means unpursued which might eventually produce the restoration of his brother; in the second, by the good opinion which father Celestine appeared to entertain of the stranger, in consequence of his confession; and in the third, by dwelling on the concluding line of the fortuneteller's prophecy, that—"*His heart must save his brother's head*;" by which expression might be meant, that an exertion of his fortitude, for which, in the present instance, some trial appeared to be preparing, must produce Dundonald's salvation.

With anxiety and impatience he awaited the approach of midnight; and when the bell of the castle had sounded the preceding hour, wrapping himself in his plaid,

and

and taking Aleck Ferguson to be his companion to the Black Height, he set out. On arriving at the Abbot's chapel, he dismissed his attendant, and according to the injunction which he had received, pursued his way alone.

The night was dark; a few faintly-shining stars, and the pale reflection of a setting moon, threw an indistinct and partial illumination on the scene, scarcely sufficient to guide the steps of the wanderer. The earl was unaccustomed to walk abroad at night, especially unattended; and it cost him no inconsiderable labour to descend the rugged hill, and proceed to the ruins. The unknown friar had mentioned no particular spot where they were to meet, and accordingly resting his arms for support and repose upon a fragment of stone, more prominent than the majority of those by which it was surrounded, and where he believed that the being whom he expected to see might with little difficulty

descry him, he awaited the coming of the mysterious monk.

Presently the hoarse voice of the castle bell proclaimed the last hour of the night, and its tones had scarcely ceased to vibrate on the air, when he heard the approach of a footstep, and observed a dusky figure moving towards him, which, as it advanced, he perceived to be the friar, whose voice he immediately recognized, as he addressed to him a short sentence, expressive of his satisfaction at finding that he had not neglected the appointment to which he had been invited.

"What is it that you now require of me to perform?" demanded the earl.

"Before we quit this spot," replied the friar, "it is necessary that you should assume my habit: if we should chance to be observed, your being thus disguised will grant security to us both."

The earl had resolved to comply with every instruction given him by his unknown

known guide, and immediately suffered himself to be habited in the sable garb, deprived of which, his companion, from what little he could perceive of his dress by the doubtful light in which it was beheld by him, appeared to be clad in a warrior's habit, upon the polished knobs of which, the pale moon at intervals cast a faint refulgence.

This transformation having been effected, the earl's companion desired him to follow him, and led the way by wary steps to the entrance upon the forest, which extended from the foot of the Black Height. Shaded by the thick foliage of the trees, they were, in a few minutes, in total darkness; and the earl's conductor perceiving the difficulty which attended his progress, as he forced his way through the underwood and straggling brambles by which the ground was covered, took his hand, and led him forward. After a while, his conductor stopped, and, quitting his hand, enjoined him not to stir from the

spot upon which he was standing. A few seconds elapsed, during which the earl was unable to discern the actions of his companion, but heard him by his side, and distinguished a sound similar to that of a weapon cutting its way through the branches of a tree. Presently silence again prevailed; and the unknown again taking his hand, and warning him that he was going to descend some steps, once more led him on.

A descent of a considerable number of steps, which appeared to be cut in the earth, brought them to even ground; and having proceeded for some minutes along a straight path, the earl was stopped by his companion, and immediately after heard what he believed to be the sound of a flint struck by the steel for the purpose of producing a light; and his opinion was in a few seconds confirmed by perceiving a sudden spark of fire, at which his companion illuminated a lamp, which had been placed in a small niche in the side of the

the rocky excavation through which they were passing. Again proceeding onwards, a sudden turn brought them to what the earl conceived to be the termination of the path, as the extremity of the low and vaulted passage towards which they were now moving, appeared to be choked up by a cluster of dead branches and winding brambles, which were piled upon each other to the very roof. These his companion, placing the lamp for a few moments in the hand of the earl, dextrously removed; and having done so, by some instantaneous and almost invisible effort, opened to his view a door, which led them into a small apartment, hewn in the body of the solid rock; and the instant they had entered it, his companion again closed the door, and secured it by drawing three bolts with which it was furnished, at equal distances from each other.

Amazement at what he beheld imposed silence on the tongue of the earl; and the stranger, in a tone of the greatest compla-

cency, requesting him to repose himself on one of the stone seats, of which there were several scattered about the place, proceeded to an excavation in the wall; and taking from it a vase of rude workmanship, said—"I well know, my lord, how inadequate are your strength and frame to a midnight toil of the nature which you have just undergone; suffer me to request that you will refresh yourself; the wine which this cup contains is good, although the vessel is coarse." The earl did feel that refreshment would be welcome to his exhausted spirits, and drank to the health of his entertainer.

The earl's companion took a seat nearly opposite to him, and drank from a different vase to that with which he had presented him; the earl observed the action; and his countenance betraying that it was remarked by him, the stranger said—"Do not imagine, my lord, that I have given you a beverage which I have any other motive for not tasting myself, except that

that water is a drink which I prefer to wine; but to satisfy you, I will pledge you in the cup which you have tasted." A small quantity only of wine had been remaining in it after the earl had made his draught, and his companion drank it with a smile to the bottom.

CHAPTER VI.

THE stranger now fixed his eyes steadfastly on the earl, and said—"In order, my lord, to explain the motive by which I have been actuated in bringing you hither, it is necessary that I should intrude upon your patience, to listen to a narrative of some occurrences, of which the date is now remote, but from which have arisen those peculiar circumstances which will shortly engage our liveliest interest and consideration."

The earl eagerly besought him to commence his detail, and the unknown spoke thus—"You cannot be unacquainted with the name of Lochiel, for the old knight, sir Allan, of whom I am first about to speak, ranked amongst the friends of your late father."

The

The earl, by a gentle inclination of his head, acknowledged the truth of the stranger's observation, who continued thus—"You have probably heard, if not, it is requisite that you should be informed, that about twenty years from the present time, sir Allan Lochiel was invested with an authority under government, to which a handsome salary was annexed, and which had in vain been solicited by a gentleman of desperate fortunes, named Fergus Dunbeith, who, in consequence of the disappointment which he had experienced, became soured against his monarch; and urged mutually by poverty and a despotic spirit, became the chief of a band of freebooters, whose depredations, since he has ranked as their leader, have been both successful and daring."

The earl was here beginning to interrupt the narrator by attempting to relate the extraordinary circumstances which that name brought to his recollection, but his companion requested that he might be

permitted

permitted to proceed to the conclusion of his detail, before he was called upon to listen to any remarks offered by the earl —a request with which Glenalpine immediately complied; and the stranger once more proceeded in his account.

"The favour in which sir Allan Lochiel stood with his king, raised against him the inveterate envy of several of the nobles of the realm, and the efforts of their prejudice eventually proved successful in poisoning the ear of majesty into the belief of his being a traitor to the authority by which he had been particularly fostered; and a sentence of outlawry was pronounced upon his person, and his castles and possessions forfeited to the crown. At this melancholy juncture, sir Allan was a widower, and the father of two children, Alexander and Fenella, who were received under the protection of a distant relative, residing in an obscure situation, but in sufficient circumstances, in the neighbourhood of Balquitther Castle.

"Sir

" Sir Allan had departed into a foreign clime, without having been able to endure the agony of bidding his children farewell, and they mourned his loss, without being at first conscious of the full extent of the misery under which they were suffering. As Alexander grew in years, and became capable of reflection on the humbled situation in which he stood in society, his spirits became depressed, and his mind uneasy; and not able to bear the degradation of moving in the world in an inferior station to that which had for centuries past been enjoyed by his ancestors, he resolved to exclude himself from the eye of man, and join the lawless band which was headed by Fergus Dunbeith.

" He communicated his intention to his sister Fenella; and when she heard his determination, she fell upon his neck, and with tears besought him not to abandon her. The relation under whose protection they had lived since the period of their innocent father's retirement into exile,

ile, had paid the debt of nature, and Fenella was now without a friend or kinsman, except her brother; and the idea of being separated from him, and doomed to a life of solitude, or at best of intercourse with beings between whom and herself there existed no reciprocal interest, appeared to her a fate worse than death itself.

"At length, perceiving him fixed upon the execution of his plan, Fenella evinced a resolution equal to his own, and declared her intention of becoming herself a member of the band, in which situation it was now alone possible that she could in future enjoy his society and protection. Alexander remonstrated against her wish; he represented to her the fatigue and hardships of a bandit's life; the peril to which his profession was constantly exposing him; and, above all, however circumspect might be her conduct, the hazard of a discovery being made of her sex, of which the consequences might prove inimical not only

only to her peace, but her honour. Not to detain you upon this part of my narrative, suffice it to say, that no argument advanced by her brother could shake Fenella from her purpose; that having converted the little property which they possessed into the means of procuring themselves arms and habits suited to the life upon which they were about to enter, Fenella, assuming the disguise of a stripling, under the fictitious title of Roderick, Alexander's younger brother, they proceeded to connect their fortunes with those of Dunbeith and his band, whose resort was at that period amidst the craigs of Kinnoul in Perthshire.

"I must here remark to you, that Fenella had a secondary motive for desiring to quit Fife. The humble habitation in which herself and her brother had lately resided, under the fictitious names of Cyprian and Malvina Sinclair, and where they had passed their hours in the culture of a small portion of land, by which it was surrounded,

surrounded, and from which they were supplied with the chief part of their subsistence, was situated upon the borders of a forest, in which the hunters of the neighbourhood were principally accustomed to pursue their diversion; and it was not unfrequent for them to call at their cottage for repose or refreshment. Of the number of those who paid them these occasional visits, was sir Robert Dundonald. From his first acquaintance with Fenella, he appeared struck with her person, and gradually proceeded to express his admiration, till his encomiums made an impression on her heart, which severely affected her peace of mind, as she reflected on the happiness which she might have enjoyed in a union with the only man who had ever yet excited her sympathetic regards, had not the honest fame of her lost father been traduced by the villainy of his enemies, and his children, in consequence of his fall from prosperity, driven from the situation which was still theirs in society, by all the laws

of

of justice and of honour; and convinced how incongruous it must be to the line of conduct which it became sir Robert Dundonald to pursue, for him to espouse the daughter of an outlaw, Fenella resolved to see him as seldom as possible; and when she did so, to receive his attentions with a coldness, which she hoped might prove effectual in withdrawing from her his regards. But in opposition to her wishes, Fenella perceived, that the more she studied to avoid him, the more he endeavoured to enjoy her conversation; and already fully aware of the justice and propriety of checking in its infancy a passion which it appeared impossible could ever ripen into a happy maturity, she resolved in future to seclude herself whenever he visited her dwelling.

"It was not long after she had formed this determination, that her brother imparted to her his intention of becoming an adherent of Dunbeith's; and it was not one of the least powerful motives by which

Fenella

Fenella was actuated, in resolving to join him in his expedition, that she should thus effectually remove herself from the temptation of breaking the determination which she had formed of relinquishing all acquaintance with sir Robert Dundonald.

"Neither Alexander nor his sister were personally known to Dunbeith; and having introduced themselves to him by feigned names, received from him the same cordial welcome which he bestowed on all who came to unite their fate with his; and the steady bravery and undaunted courage displayed by Alexander, gained him frequent indulgences for his nominal brother, in whom an equally-able adherent to the common cause was expected, as he grew in years and strength.

"About three years from the time at which we are speaking," continued the stranger, "Dunbeith conceiving himself unsafe in Perthshire, where means were concerting for destroying his association, removed his band into Fife, where the spot

spot chosen for their abode was an excavation in the rocks upon the margin of the sea, known by the name of the Devil's Cave; and you must, my lord, be well acquainted, that the principal and only entrance which is publicly known to the range of recesses, which from thence succeed each other, to an incredible distance, in the bosom of the rocks, is situated at the distance of scarcely two miles from Balquitther Castle. I cannot give you any idea which will more readily convince you how vast and numerous are the excavations which, from that entrance, extend themselves in every direction beneath the surface of the earth, than by informing you, that the spot you are now on forms a part of those subterranean caverns."

"What!" exclaimed the earl, "am I then in the power of Dunbeith?"

"No, my lord, no!" emphatically pronounced the stranger; "you are in the power of no one but myself, and I am not of a nature to adventure what I have hazarded

warded in bringing you hither, from any motive but that of justice and humanity. Rest also assured, that you are here as impregnable to the power and knowledge of man, as if you were buried a million of fathoms beneath the surface of the ocean.—But suffer me to proceed to the conclusion of my narrative. The band of Dunbeith had been removed hither only a few weeks, when Fenella experienced the heaviest affliction with which she considered it possible for the hand of destiny to assail her, in the death of her brother, who fell a victim to a disease that proved fatal to several others of the community. What was now to become of Fenella? She no longer possessed a protector of her weakness, nor a redresser of injuries. Every hour now teemed to her with danger, lest some unguarded moment, some imposed exertion, might expose the secret of her sex, and by this discovery heap additional misery on her head. Were she resolved to fly from the painful existence

which

which she was enduring, whither could she bend her steps? As a stranger, what plea could she advance for attempting to excite the commiseration of the world? And to confess herself either the daughter of the exiled Lochiel, or to avow that she had led the unwarranted life of a bandit, was equally to steel the hearts of her countrymen against her solicitations. Were she to seek the refuge of a convent, its gates would, upon the same apology, be shut against her. Her brain almost maddened under the reflections with which her heart was breaking, and the only temporary relief for her feelings which she was capable of tasting, was to separate herself from the horde in which an extraordinary fate had placed her, and to derive imaginary consolation from believing herself to address the shade of her loved, her lamented brother, and supplicate his intercession in her behalf."

As the stranger uttered these words, his voice faltered, and the earl perceived a tear

a tear stealing down his cheek.—"Pardon me," he said, "if my suspicion be ill founded; but I am led to believe, both from the subject of your narrative and the emotion with which I see you affected at the recollection of the circumstance upon which you are dwelling, that you are yourself that Fenella whose tale you have been relating."

The stranger wiped the tear from her cheek, and in a deep, but impressive tone, replied—"Well, well, I confess myself; you have wrung the secret from me before its time—but no matter; I intended to have led you gradually to its disclosure in the progress of my relation; but you must have known it soon, and I am almost glad that it is revealed to you. Yes, my lord," she added, with difficulty checking the rising tears as she spoke, "that was a day, the day of my beloved brother Alexander's death, of such misery as I trust that few besides myself have ever experienced."

After a short pause, Fenella proceeded

—"On

—"On our arrival at our new abode, we found there a few stragglers from some other band, who having fled from their chief, with whom they had disagreed, were thankful for the permission which they received to join our association. Amongst these was a man in the vale of years, of a harsh but impressive countenance—to the eye of consideration apparently more austere than savage in disposition—and who being instantly recognized as an old acquaintance by Fergus Dunbeith, their intimacy appeared daily to increase, and he became evidently the favourite companion of our leader: his name was Andrew Campsie.

"One morning when I had strolled to the sea-shore, in order to indulge in solitary meditation on my unparalleled fate, lost in reflective and anxious thought, I had cast myself at the foot of one of the rocks, and, scarcely conscious that I uttered aloud the sorrows of my heart—'Oh, my loved brother!' I exclaimed,

'had it been the will of Heaven to have required my life at the moment which terminated thy unfortunate existence, I had been blessed, and the last of the unhappy race of Allan Lochiel had thus been released from the unjust persecution of man!' As I ceased speaking, a slight sound attracted my attention; and on raising my eyes, I beheld the figure of a man, with folded arms, whose countenance was bent towards me, in attentive observation of my person: it was Andrew Campsie.—'What dost thou know of the name of Lochiel?' he asked; 'how art thou connected with it?'—I hesitated to reply, for I was at a loss how to answer him, and he again spoke.—'If thou art indeed one to whom that name bears reference, fear not to confess thyself to me; I could not experience a greater satisfaction upon earth than in rendering a service to a descendant of sir Allan's.'—'How can I give credit to your words?' I asked.—'Your surety is my repentance,' he added:

ed: 'I was once sufficiently a villain to commit an injury against the peace of sir Allan Lochiel, and I could not derive greater satisfaction from any circumstance than that of meeting an opportunity of repairing in some measure to his descendants, the wrongs which I have done to their ancestor.'

"The words of the speaker wrapt me in profound attention, and he proceeded thus:—'Did I not hear you speak of a brother, and still name yourself a descendant of the house of Lochiel? You have furnished me with a riddle which I cannot solve. Sir Allan, whose fate there is not a being in existence more sincerely mourns than I do, was himself, with the exception of his children, the last of his race; and at the time of his separation from them, he was the father of only one son and one daughter. If you are that son, who is the brother of whom I heard you speak?'

"The friendship which Andrew proceeded to profess for my parent, and the

entreaties which he used, to be informed whether I bore any connexion to the exiled sir Allan, by slow degrees drew from me a secret, which I had, a short time before, believed that I should never be tempted to impart to any individual: but the voice of sympathy is a powerful operator on the human heart, and the promise of a friend was so unexpected a blessing, to a being standing, as I was, alone in the world, that I considered myself favoured by Providence, in having introduced to my knowledge one upon whose protection it appeared that I might, upon any emergency, rely.

"After this explanation had taken place between us, we found frequent opportunities of conversing together in private; and amidst other circumstances of which he gave me information, he acquainted me, that nearly six years had now elapsed since my father had paid the debt of nature; and, repeating the intimacy which had once subsisted between them, informed

formed me that his real name was sir James M'Culloch, and that he had for a considerable time possessed the esteem and intimacy of my parent, till a difference of opinion in politics, which he confessed himself to have warmly maintained, and now to repent of, had broken their friendship. He said that I was an infant at the period of their discordance, and that he was not surprised at my total ignorance of his name, as he doubted not that it had never been mentioned in the hearing of sir Allan, or any of his connexions, subsequently to the time of their disagreement.

" I found Andrew Campsie, for so I must still continue to call him, a most beneficial adherent, as his influence with Dunbeith was frequently exerted to exempt me from various acts of toil and exercise, which I should have been very incapable of undergoing.

" It is now only a few months ago, since, as Andrew and myself were one

day strolling upon the sands near the spot where our first conversation had taken place, and I was, as I had often before done, dwelling upon the motives which had impelled me to enter upon the extraordinary mode of life, for one of my sex, which he had found me pursuing, I, for the first time, mentioned to him the marked attentions which, as an humble peasant, I had received from sir Robert Dundonald, and observed to him, as I have already this night done to you, how forcibly my desire of crushing in the bud the advances which I felt him to be making towards my heart, had operated in strengthening my inclination to unite my destiny with that of my deceased brother, in the new mode of life upon which he had resolved to enter.

"Circumstances of a nature too weighty to be trifled with, here impel me to overstep, as I fear it may appear to you, my lord, the prescribed pale of virgin timidity, and explicitly to relate to you the conversation

sation which that evening passed between Andrew Campsie and myself, after the avowal which I have just recounted had passed my lips.—'I understand then,' said Andrew, 'that it was principally to withdraw yourself from the acquaintance of sir Robert Dundonald, upon whom you were resolved not to impose yourself for any character but the one you really were, considering it impossible that he could continue to regard you as he had before done, when your origin were once disclosed to him, that you resolved to enter the band of Dunbeith with your brother?'—'I have already fully explained to you that such was the case,' I replied. —'And you suppose,' he rejoined, 'that, notwithstanding the imagined inferiority of your birth, sir Robert's passion for you was so strong, that he was prepared to offer you his hand in marriage?'—'The expressions of virtuous affection which he again and again repeated to me,' I returned, 'could leave me no doubt upon

that subject.'—'And had your consent to his wishes been consistent with the principles of honour,' said Andrew, 'I think I may gather from what you have imparted to me, that you would have felt no hesitation in yielding to his suit?'—'I feel no shame,' I replied, 'in confessing a virtuous affection, which I have possessed sufficient resolution, if not to conquer, at least to fly from.'—'I am truly happy,' he answered, 'that you have made this avowal to me, as it enables me to prepare you against a surprise, with which, if you had been too suddenly affected, it might have overpowered your spirits, and consequently been the means of exposing the secret which you so carefully guard. In the common discharge of your duty to Dunbeith, as your leader, there is a daily chance of your beholding sir Robert Dundonald: he is, and has been for some months past, a prisoner within the recesses of these rocks.'—'Dundonald a prisoner of Dunbeith's!' I exclaimed. 'What can be

be his motive for detaining him?'—'The expectation of a heavy ransom, no doubt,' Andrew replied, 'at least such appears the only ostensible cause of his captivity. But Dunbeith has never been explicit upon this business to any individual, not even to myself, who, I believe, share the greatest portion of his confidence.'—'God be with him!' I ejaculated. 'And you, my friend, I implore you, by that sympathy which you have displayed for my sufferings, if possible so to concert measures that I may not be impelled to behold him. What would Dundonald think of her whom he once esteemed, were he to behold her in this habit, and in this place? There is distraction in the bare idea!'

"Andrew promised, if possible, to be my friend in this particular, as he had already been in various other instances; and when we parted, and I retired to my pallet, it was only to indulge in reflections

natural to the unprecedented situation in which I felt myself placed.

"The wanderings of my imagination subsequent to the period of my becoming acquainted with your brother's captivity, I shall not, my lord, exhaust your patience by detailing, but proceed to the recital of those circumstances which have urged my appeal to your interest in my cause.—Many weeks elapsed, during which I heard no more from Andrew respecting sir Robert, than that he was well, and bore his fate without suffering his manly spirit to be depressed by his unjust thraldom. At one of my conversations about this time with Andrew, I observed him to be unusually thoughtful, and apparently less animated in speech than he commonly was: I enquired the cause, and with some little hesitation he replied, that he did not consider Dunbeith to use him well; that they had been old and serviceable friends to each other, and that he had lately

lately experienced slights from him, which had chafed his temper, and materially weakened the regard which he had once borne him.—'Had any other man,' he concluded by saying, 'treated me as Fergus Dunbeith did last night, my sword had not lost a moment in acquainting him with my opinion of his conduct. But it is the last time that I will brook his overbearing insolence; I have told him so; and it will be well for him if he bears my words in his memory.'

"About six weeks after this, and twelve days from the present period, Andrew gave me a signal which I well understood, inviting me to follow him to a private spot. I complied; and when we were alone, he said—'The slight services which I have been able to render you since the commencement of our acquaintance, were, as I have already told you, performed in repentance of an injury which I once committed towards your parent. What I have hitherto done, I was enabled to do without

infringing upon the ties by which I had bound myself to Dunbeith; but his ill conduct towards me daily increasing, I am resolved to shake him off, and to relieve my own heart by an act of justice, which can alone atone for my past misdeeds. Lady Fenella,' he emphatically added, 'prepare yourself for unexpected joy; I will restore sir Robert Dundonald to liberty, and by exposing the villainy of your father's enemies, so firmly substantiate his innocence to the world, that you shall be acknowledged the undisputed equal of the man who possesses your affections; but you must be content to be implicitly guided by me in the progress of events.'

"It must be almost needless to observe, that this intelligence communicated both pleasure and exultation to my heart, and I eagerly inquired of Andrew, in what manner he hoped to effect the liberation of sir Robert? He replied, that the means were in his hands, but that he would not acquaint

acquaint me with his plan, until he could congratulate me upon the escape of the man in whom my feelings were most interested, from the present tyrant of his fate. I enquired when I might hope to receive the glad tidings of his release, and his answer was, that he could not fix a period for the accomplishment of his design, but that, the moment it had been effected, he would acquaint me with his success. Several days passed on in anxiety indescribable; what we most wish we most fear, and I dreaded the failure of Andrew's plan. At length my faithful friend informed me that Dundonald was in safety.—'Heaven be praised!' I fervently ejaculated, 'Dundonald is once more in safety within the walls of Balquitther Castle!'—'No, no, lady,' replied Andrew, 'not within the walls of Balquitther Castle; it would not be a place of safety for him, unless his return to it were attended with certain precautions, which must

must be taken before he can venture thither in security.'

"I besought him to explain himself, and his reply was this——"

At this instant a gentle, but hollow tap, which sounded upon a door similar to the one at which Fenella and the earl had entered, and situated immediately opposite to it in the rocky wall, arrested their attention. The earl betrayed instant dread of a surprise; Fenella reassured him, by pronouncing—"It can only be Andrew Campsie; he alone is acquainted with the existence of this spot."

Fenella proceeded to open the door, and when a male form, closely muffled in a plaid, had entered the apartment, she again closed and secured it, by drawing across it three bolts, in like manner as she had done that by which she had introduced the earl.

A few minutes elapsed, during which the man, disengaging himself from his plaid,

plaid, discovered a person corresponding with the description which Fenella had given of Andrew; and whilst he and Fenella, in whispering accents, interchanged a few sentences together, the eyes of the earl for the first time glancing around the apartment, he perceived a third door, similar to the two which he had already observed, and, like them, secured with three bolts drawn across at equal distances: instantly the prediction of the fortune-teller recurred to his mind—

> "Where thrice three bolts unite, beware!
> For there is spread the tangled snare."

But, after the confession which Fenella had just made to him, he found it impossible for a moment to suppose that she could be his enemy; whatever she were, he could not now do otherwise than patiently await the termination of his adventure; and his spirits were cheered by the recollection of the encouraging smile which he had received from the protecting spirit of his race, in the Abbot's chapel, on the

the morning succeeding the funeral of the countess.

Fenella now advancing towards the earl with Andrew Campsie, presented him to Glenalpine, as the friend of whom she had spoken; and Andrew falling on one of his knees before the earl, said, that, were his past life alone to be considered, he should feel not only shame but reluctance to appear before a loyal and well-esteemed nobleman like Glenalpine; but that he trusted his present repentance, and the service which he had devoted himself to render his house, would procure him the condescension of the earl. To which address, when Glenalpine had replied that the man, whoever he was, or whatever might have been his former misdeeds, who felt interest in the fate of his brother, and had boldly adventured forth in his cause, could not be regarded with indifference by him, Andrew, rising, at the command of the earl, from his knee, replied—"Before, my lord, I ever had the honour

of

of beholding sir Robert Dundonald, I had experienced the satisfaction of preserving the existence of one of your household, whose welfare I have been informed that your generous consideration for the long-tried fidelity of your old steward causes you to regard with considerable interest: the person, my lord, to whom I allude, is old Baldrummie's niece, Robina."

"You preserve the life of Robina!" exclaimed the earl—"For Heaven's sake, explain yourself."

"Permit me, my lord," returned Andrew, "to take up the narrative of past events, at the period where, I understand, the lady Fenella broke off her recital at my entrance, and every mysterious circumstance of which you can desire an explanation, will be unfolded to you in the course of my detail."

The earl acquiesced, and Andrew Campsie proceeded thus:—"In order, my lord, clearly to explain other circumstances, it

is

is necessary that I should obtrude upon you a short sketch of my own unfortunate history. My real name is James M'Culloch: in my early years, sir Allan Lochiel and sir Fergus Dunbeith were both my intimate friends, but the greater part of my time was passed in the society of sir Fergus, for my inclinations were devoted to pleasure, and when my own means, which were slender for the appearance which I supported in life, failed me, his purse was in the habit of supplying the deficiency of mine. But too keenly did I eventually suffer for allowing myself to become his debtor.

"From the moment that Dunbeith beheld the authority under government with which he had himself sued to be invested, bestowed upon sir Allan Lochiel, his hatred and malice were excited against the peace and welfare of that nobleman: he informed me of a nefarious plan which he had devised against him, and demanded my assistance in bringing it to maturity.

I was

I was already his dependant, and a false apprehension of poverty assailing me if I were deprived of his friendship, added to my fear of the vengeance to which he might devote me if I refused compliance with his will, tempted me to accede to his proposals. And to dismiss, in as few words as possible, a subject, at the recollection of which my heart experiences regret equal to the horror with which yours must be affected at the contemplation of my crime, suffice it to confess, that I penned those letters, and produced those seeming proofs of Lochiel's disloyalty, which drew down upon him, from the lips of his monarch, the unjust sentence under which he suffered and died. And this confession will fully explain to you the motive by which my heart, now filled with repentance for my past misdeeds, has been actuated in devoting itself to the service of the lady Fenella."

Shame and contrition appeared to overcome Andrew Campsie as he spoke, and for

for a few moments he wandered about the place with a disturbed countenance and agitated steps.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER a while, Andrew resumed his narrative—"When Fergus," he said, "had satiated his vengeance with the destruction of his rival, no resource remained to himself and me, whose fortunes had for a considerable time been desperate, but to devote ourselves to the plunder of those who had been more wary in the preservation of their possessions than ourselves; and we joined a band of freebooters in the county of Kincardine, with whom we, in a short time, removed to the craigs of Kinnoul. It is not necessary that I should dwell on the account of any transaction unconnected with that part of my history in

in which you, my lord, are interested. The only act of plunder and violence, accordingly, of which I shall speak, was that committed on the property and family of a farmer, named Hugh Stewart, residing in the linn of Mackarsey, and the father of that Robina, whom I have this night already mentioned. After our design in entering the house had been accomplished, Fergus and myself were the last who quitted it, and as we were on the point of departing, we discovered Robina concealed under some straw, in a corner of the kitchen; and Fergus, whose disposition I grieve to acknowledge, from the intimate connection which I have had with him, is as cruel as it is avaricious, immediately drew his sword, and would have plunged it to her heart; but I withheld him from the savage act, and ultimately prevailed upon him to spare her life. I have particularly noted this circumstance, because you will find it to be of material consequence

quence in the subsequent part of my detail.

"Some time after this transaction, Dunbeith, apprehensive that himself and his band could not remain much longer in security in Perthshire, sent me, and ten others of our community, into Fifeshire, with an order to take possession of the Devil's Cave, of which he described to us the situation previously to our setting out, and commanded us to make excursions about the country, in order to ascertain what prospect it appeared to hold out for inducing him to transport himself, and the remainder of his associates, thither. Not long after our separation from the main body of our community, you, lady Fenella, and your deceased brother, joined the party, which still remained with Dunbeith in Perthshire; and at no considerable distance from that period, Fergus, apprehensive for his safety, if he remained amidst the craigs of Kinnoul, as his retreat

was

was publicly known, removed his band into Fife, to the Devil's Cave, where myself, and those who had been deputed by him to accompany me, were already stationed; and as I have since gathered from the words of lady Fenella, we were not known by herself and her brother to have been a part of Dunbeith's followers, who had, at his direction, been, for a time, disunited from the main band.

"A considerable time passed away, unmarked by any event which could interest you, my lord, in the relation, when sir Robert Dundonald was brought a prisoner to our stronghold; and the ransom which Dunbeith demanded of him proved so immense, that sir Robert spurned his terms, and declared that he would sooner submit to eternal seclusion from the world, than subject his family to a fine which must reduce both their future comforts and state.

"But before I had spoken at all of sir Robert Dundonald, I should have premised

mised to you, that on the first arrival of myself and my companions in Fifeshire, on taking possession of the caverns connected with this spot, we found in them an extraordinary resident, a man, whose appearance conveyed the idea of a hermit, bowed down by age and infirmity; he was coarsely clad; his feet and head were bare, and his beard, of snowy whiteness, covered his breast. Immediately divining the purpose for which we had been attracted thither, he made it his request to me, that he might still be permitted to dwell on the spot, which he said had sheltered him for about half a century; and my permission to that effect having been readily granted him, he peculiarly attached himself to me, informing me that I was the only being with whom he had, for a considerable number of years past, held social converse. As our intimacy increased, I learnt that he had once been a member of a band of banditti, who had, at a distant period, inhabited the same retreat

treat in which we were now about to become settlers; but that all his companions were either dead or dispersed, and that he had for many years devoted himself to a life of seclusion and repentance; never straying forth from the spot of his retirement, except to beg alms, or gather berries for his subsistence. He was very old when I first saw him, and in the course of a year became so fragile as to be incapable of exertion, and confined himself almost entirely to his pallet, where humanity impelled me frequently to visit him, and administer in the best manner I was able to his necessities.

"One morning, when I was sitting by his side—'My friend,' he said, 'I feel my last hour rapidly approaching. Heaven kindly sent you hither to close my eyes; but for your arrival here, this form had probably never been beheld by man after the flight of its last breath. There is only one way by which it is in my power to requite you for the kindness which I have

received at your hands; I am possessed of a secret with which it may be of service to you, at some period of your life, to be acquainted, and I will disclose it to you, whilst yet the power of so doing remains to me.' He then enjoined me to take the first opportunity which occurred for remaining in the cavern when my companions were abroad; saying, that he would benefit by the hour of their absence for making the discovery to me of which he had spoken.

"The desired opportunity was soon given; and the old man, with feeble and trembling steps, conducted me to the rocky excavation in which we are now sitting, instructed me where to find the almost-indiscernible doors by which it is entered, and in what manner to move the concealed springs by which they can alone be opened; and when he found me sufficiently acquainted with the secret to the knowledge of which he had admitted me, he took leave of the spot as of an old friend,

and

and returned to his pallet. To my inquiries by whom this secret recess had been constructed, and by what means it had become known to him? he replied, that the leader of a band which had once inhabited the Devil's Cave, but which had now long been dispersed, and the chief himself, of whom he spoke, many years numbered with the dead, had been his intimate friend; and that he had confided to him the secret on his deathbed, in like manner as he had that day imparted it to me. The tradition of its original formation, which the deceased leader had communicated to him at the time of his placing him in the knowledge of its existence, was this:—At a very remote period, a sanguinary and greedy bandit, named Harold Reay, had inhabited these caverns; the plunder committed by his band was of the most successful kind, and their wealth accumulated so quickly, that Harold, fearing lest his associates might each claim their share of the riches which they

had each individually assisted to amass, and thus furnished, fall off from their allegiance to him, and abjure their present mode of life, determined to devise some plan for secreting a part of their treasure; and by instilling into their minds a belief that they were continually suffering robberies from some concealed depredators, compel them to persist in their nefarious practices from necessity. At this time there chanced to be in his band a mason and carpenter of remarkable ingenuity, and Harold having confided to these two men his plan, engaged them, by the promise of great rewards, to execute the project which he had devised; upon the work being completed, he invited them into the secret excavation, which they had with long and heavy labour accomplished, to receive the reward of their industry; and when there, in order to cut off all possibility of the secret ever being divulged, he stabbed them both to the heart; and not the remotest suspicion of the true

cause

cause of their disappearance from the community of which they were members, was ever entertained by their surviving associates. This secret, Harold is supposed, upon his deathbed, to have entrusted to some chosen friend; and the knowledge, in like manner, to have descended from one individual to another, till, at length, imparted to me by the recluse whom I have just described to you, and whose existence terminated a few hours after he had communicated to me the discovery. And having thus accounted for my acquaintance with this spot, I may proceed with the thread of my narrative.

"About eighteen months after the period of sir Robert becoming Dunbeith's prisoner, the latter one day informed me that he had business in Edinburgh, and that I must accompany him thither on the morrow. When that time arrived, according to his instruction, I assumed the habit of a wealthy country gentleman, and he wore a plain suit, adapted to one from

the middling ranks of life. On our way thither he informed me, that having gained intelligence that the earl of Glenalpine's gamekeeper was lately dead, he had resolved to offer himself to supply the situation; and was now proceeding to Edinburgh, in order to present himself to the agent of the earl's affairs in that city, and that it must be my business to give him a recommendation for the office, in the character of a gentleman of distinction from the North, with whom he had for a considerable time resided, and who had no cause for parting from him, but that of curtailing his establishment: and to my inquiry of what purpose he meant to answer by pursuing this plan, he replied, that the funds of our community were growing low; in consequence of which, he found that it would shortly be necessary for him to accept any ransom which he could procure for the release of sir Robert Dundonald, in order to supply the necessities of his band; but, that being resolved

solved to gain the most which it was possible for him to acquire from the contingency in his power, it was his design, whilst a resident in Balquitther Castle, to insinuate himself into the confidence of the earl's favourite domestics, and having gathered from them the extent of the sum which they believed Glenalpine would produce for the restoration of his brother, to act upon the knowledge thus obtained for offering terms of liberation to sir Robert on his return to the cavern.

"Having accomplished the design for which we had entered Edinburgh, we again bent our steps towards Fife; and at the distance of a few miles from Balquitther Castle, we separated. I pursued my way to our haunt; and Dunbeith proceeded towards the castle, interrogating those he met relative to his road thither, in order to support the character of a stranger to the country, under which he had resolved to pass; and to substantiate which assumption, he relinquished his northern

 accent,

accent, and confined himself to the low-land dialect.

"Nearly three weeks had elapsed, during which I had heard nothing of Dunbeith, when early one morning, I was awakened by hearing my name loudly pronounced, and on opening my eyes, I perceived him standing by my side. The moment he was satisfied that I beheld him, he called upon me in a loud and angry voice to follow him; I obeyed, and leading me to a private spot—'You have nearly been the cause of my destruction,' he exclaimed; 'I have with difficulty escaped with my life; and the purpose for which I entered the castle is utterly defeated; curses on your chicken-hearted humanity! The inherent folly of your breast, which you dignify by the name of pity and feeling, has been on the point of sacrificing your friend's life; may I perish unrevenged, if ever I attend to your womanish advice again!' He then proceeded to inform me, that in Balquitther Castle, he

he had most unexpectedly met Robina, and that he had instantly recognized her, notwithstanding the advancement which she had made towards womanhood since he had last beheld her; that he had hoped to have passed unremembered by her, but that on the first morning on which he had beheld her, she had remarked that she believed she had seen him before, although she could not immediately recollect where; and trembling lest her memory should in time furnish her with that recollection, which must have proved fatal to his safety, he had from that moment resolved on her destruction.

"For a considerable time, he had been perplexed in what manner to effect his purpose, but having heard it whispered amongst the servants in Balquitther Castle, that a private affection had subsisted between sir Robert Dundonald and Robina, he had written her an ambiguous letter, in the name of sir Robert, soliciting her to meet him between the hours of two

and three in the morning, amidst the ruins of the monastery of St. Cyrus; adjuring her not to divulge to any individual her receipt of the letter; and adding, that at their meeting, he would disclose to her the cause of his long and mysterious absence from the castle. This letter he contrived to convey unobserved into her chamber; and in expectation of her arrival at the appointed spot, he proceeded thither in the dead of night, and dug a grave, in which he intended to conceal her corpse after he had deprived her of existence. At the specified time, he saw her approaching, and seizing her by the hand, informed her of the horrid purpose for which he had invited her thither; as she struggled to escape from his grasp, he pointed his dagger at her heart, but in her efforts to free herself from his hold, it entered her arm; and before he could repeat his blow, he was assailed by voices and the report of a pistol, in consequence of which he fled; and conscious that his villainy must

must be detected, not daring to return to the castle, he proceeded to one of the concealed entrances to the cavern, and having gained its recesses, instantly flew to impart to me his rage and disappointment."

Andrew Campsie here interrupted himself in his narrative, to express the delight which he experienced at Robina having been preserved from the horrid death with which she had been threatened; and the earl, in return, related to his companions the providential and surprising manner in which her salvation had been effected.—"I think—I think," falteringly pronounced Fenella, "that it could be only the impulse of friendship, or at most, of a sisterly affection, which could impel Robina to accede to the proposed meeting with Dundonald; at least, the expressions which he again and again repeated to me, and called on Heaven to witness their purity, tempt me to believe that it could not be a feeling of a more tender nature."

"I have observed my brother delighted with the society of Robina beyond that of any other female," remarked the earl; "but as they grew together from their youth, I never considered their attachment to be any other than that innocent affection which naturally arises in susceptible hearts from constant intercourse and familiar habits."

"You are also to recollect, lady," said Andrew, "that nearly five years have elapsed since you have either been seen or heard of by him, and during which period, all traces of you have been lost to him."

"True," rejoined Fenella; "but I have not forgotten him, although so long a period has intervened since we have met, nor has my attachment to him diminished; and should his heart be transferred to another, I will prove the strength of my affection for him, by displaying myself sufficiently happy in the knowledge of his felicity."

The

The earl warmly applauded the disinterested spirit of his new friend; and Andrew resumed his narrative in these words —"From this time, Fergus Dunbeith evidently began to withdraw his confidence from me, and to shower his favour on one of the community, named Oscar Murdoch; that he was a man qualified by nature for the execution of artful and nefarious plans, you, my lord, have received substantial proof; for he it was who defrauded you of six thousand pounds, in the assumed character of captain Gordon. The attempt to deceive you out of the sum which you had publicly offered for your brother's restoration, was the very purpose which carried him to your castle, the fertile brain of Fergus having devised this plan for procuring a double remuneration for the liberty of sir Robert; how well he succeeded in his villainy, you are yourself already acquainted.

"The alteration in Dunbeith's conduct towards me daily increased, and he did not

not only express himself in silent marks of displeasure, but openly vented his spleen and ill-nature, in so gross a manner, that one evening, when my patience had sustained a trial, before unknown to me; at least from him, I resolved to become the rescuer of sir Robert, and the open avenger of the lady Fenella's wrongs, which intention I that evening took an opportunity of imparting to her in private.

"In the course of a few days, I succeeded in removing sir Robert Dundonald to a spot where it was impossible that human means could trace him out, and without the slightest suspicion falling on me of my having abetted his rescue. But now arose my greatest difficulty; how to communicate to you my goodwill towards your brother, or what means to pursue for restoring him in safety to the bosom of his family. I foresaw, that if sir Robert were permitted to return to Balquither Castle before you had been warned

to

to call out your vassals in arms for his protection, that the band of Fergus, exasperated to madness by his restoration to liberty without ransom, would venture upon any excess for revenge; and this point admitted, how was information of the truth to be conveyed to you, whom the repeated impositions under which you had lately suffered, could not but render suspicious of the intelligence imparted, by any unknown person, who might introduce himself into your presence?

"In this dilemma an idea struck me, which I immediately communicated to the lady Fenella, and cannot sufficiently extol the promptitude and diligence with which she undertook the execution of the design that I had conceived; it was, that she should visit Balquitther Castle in the garb of a friar, desiring to be shrived by father Celestine, that her story should compose her confession to the holy man, and that when he had listened to her detail,

tail, she should beseech him to exert his influence in procuring her the confidence of your lordship, and that, having conducted you hither, you should learn, from the lips of your brother, that he was no longer the captive of Fergus Dunbeith, and himself well aware of the precautions necessary to be taken for restoring him to the light of day."

Here ended the recital of Andrew Campsie; and the expressions of gratitude with which the heart of the earl overflowed to the preserver of his brother, were not less emphatic than those which he bestowed on the unshaken constancy of the unfortunate Fenella.

"But where, where is my brother?" exclaimed the earl; "lead me, I beseech you, to him—in mercy withhold me no longer from his embrace!"

"Your brother, my lord," replied Andrew, "is not far distant from you, although hitherto unconscious of your proximity

imity to him. That door," he added, pointing to the one which had not yet been opened, " alone divides him from you. The lady Fenella and myself judged it becoming that you should be made acquainted with the circumstances which we have this night revealed to you, ere you beheld him, in order that your mind might not be divested of its composure by the joy of once more meeting your beloved relative, and thus unfitted for giving due attention and consideration to the detail to which you have been listening."

" Now then, my lord," pronounced Fenella, " I shall for a while quit you; and remember, that whatever the result of your conversation with sir Robert Dundonald, I shall ever remain inviolably the friend of him who alone ever awakened those sentiments in my heart, which, from the hour of my acquaintance with him, have been dead to every other object;" and with an expression of countenance which denoted firmness, but equally tenderness

derness of heart, she then left the apartment.

Andrew trimmed the lamp upon the table—"When you wish to see me again, my lord," he said, "sound with your knuckles upon the centre of the door by which I am about to depart, and I will immediately be at your command."

"But my brother," ejaculated the earl.

"Undraw the three bolts which secure the door that I have pointed out to you," replied Andrew, "and you will behold him;" and as he pronounced these words, he followed Fenella, quitting the cave by the door at which he had entered it.

The earl hastily undrew the bolts, and opening the door, beheld the long-lost Robert, sleeping on a couch of straw, in a small apartment, where he had been furnished with every comfort which Andrew had been capable of affording him. A cheerful fire was blazing in the rude chimney, a lamp was burning on the table, and refreshments of various kinds were placed

by

by its side.—"Oh, my brother, my brother!" exclaimed the earl, "awake and behold——"

The words were electrical to the heart of sir Robert; an instant released him from the bands of sleep, and in the same instant he was enfolded in the arms of Glenalpine.

Dundonald was already acquainted with the motive from which Andrew had withheld him from proceeding to the castle; but he immediately expressed the greatest anxiety to be permitted to quit the cavern in disguise, and remain secreted in any spot which might be selected for his concealment, until the vassals of his brother were under arms, in order that he might himself lead them on to vengeance upon the lawless bandit at whose hands both his brother and himself had been so unjust sufferers.

The earl replied—"that, in his opinion, the friendship of Andrew demanded that every condescension should be paid to his counsel;

counsel; that he intended himself to be implicitly guided by it, and fervently desired that Dundonald would also, for the present, admit him as the rule of his actions and proceedings."

Sir Robert could not repress a smile at the natural timidity of his brother, and requested that Andrew might be immediately summoned to their presence, and their judgments weighed against each other.

"He shall presently join us," returned the earl; "but I wish first to acquaint you, that great as is your debt of gratitude to Andrew Campsie, your thanks are not solely due to him; there has been another agent in your cause, who merits your warmest acknowledgments, perhaps even in a superior degree to Andrew himself."

"I cannot be rendered more happy," answered sir Robert, "than in tendering any requital in my power to whomsoever has displayed the humanity to be interested

ed in my cause. To whom is it that you refer?"

"Pardon me, my dear brother," rejoined the earl, "for replying to your inquiry by advancing another to you. Tell me candidly, for the confession is of moment, and necessary to be made, is your heart your own? is it unshackled by the fetters of love?"

"It appears extraordinary," answered sir Robert, "that you should make that demand at this critical moment; but my heart is open with the joy of beholding you once again, and cannot make any concealment from one whom it so affectionately regards; and let me hope, that should I confess to you that my heart has long been enslaved, and that you should find the being who can alone constitute my happiness to be my inferior in the scale of birth, you will suffer the excellent qualities of her mind to be admitted as an equivalent for the deficiency."

"If my approbation be alone requisite to

to render you satisfied with the election you have made, be assured, that I not only admire and respect the object of your affection, but consider that her exertions in your cause richly entitle her to the recompence of your hand," said Glenalpine.

"You are then acquainted," returned Dundonald, "who is the idol of my heart?"

"Unequivocally so," answered Glenalpine.

"And is it she to whom you refer, in having been efficient in procuring me the blessing of approaching liberty?" asked sir Robert.

"It is," replied the earl; "but she shall herself explain to you the services she has rendered you."

"Oh, when, when shall I experience the joy of beholding her?" ejaculated sir Robert.

"She is near at hand," returned the earl, "and I will immediately request her permission to conduct her to you."

The

The rapture of a beating heart was displayed in the animated countenance of sir Robert; and the earl proceeding to the door upon which Andrew had directed him to give his signal, when he required his return, it was immediately replied to by the appearance of Campsie, of whom the earl inquiring for the lady Fenella, she advanced at the sound of his voice; and whilst Andrew addressed himself to Dundonald, the earl having, in a brief manner, explained to her what had passed between his brother and himself, led her forward.

The satisfaction which had before beamed in the countenance of sir Robert, now sparkled in the half-averted eyes of Fenella; whilst the delight so lately visible in the features of sir Robert gradually yielded to a mixed expression of consternation and disappointment, as his regards fixed themselves upon the person of Fenella.

The earl remarked the change, and smiling, said—"This habit, no doubt, deceives

ceives you, but gaze on, and you will quickly recognize in this apparent youth the lady Fenella Lochiel, or if she be better known to you by another name, your adored Malvina Sinclair."

"Malvina Sinclair here at this moment!" exclaimed sir Robert. "Merciful Heaven! how extraordinary are thy decrees!"

"What means this amazement?—In Heaven's name explain this mystery!" ejaculated the earl; whilst Fenella, abashed, mortified, and shrinking within herself, sunk half-fainting upon the supporting arm of Andrew Campsie.

Sir Robert raised his eyes with a look of contending, of indefinable sensations, towards heaven; he then suffered his head to fall upon his clasped hands, and in a scarcely-audible voice pronounced—"Oh, ye blessed powers! could I have believed that I should ever have beheld Malvina Sinclair again!"

"Come, come, awake from this dream

of

of surprise," said Glenalpine, "and turn your contemplation to the happiness that awaits you, in the permission which this amiable being grants you to name yourself her destined husband."

"Her destined husband!" echoed sir Robert, "her husband!—it is now impossible that I should ever become her husband. I know not how we have been led into the labyrinth of error in which we are all straying, but I feel that it becomes me, under the circumstances in which I am placed, to unveil the truth. I am, and long have been, the husband of Robina Stewart!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE consternation which seized upon the earl of Glenalpine and the lady Fenella, at this declaration on the part of sir Robert Dundonald, may be easily imagined.

The short silence which ensued was broken by Fenella.—"This is a moment," she said, "in which the affairs of the heart are secondary to the great concern of life and honour. I have already averred, that no contingency could deprive sir Robert Dundonald of my friendship; let us then, for the present, proceed only to consider how it were best to act for his preservation, and the punishment of his enemies."

"I know not," replied sir Robert, "how to express myself to you in terms becoming your magnanimity of heart, and disinterested

interested friendship: but I have an explanation to make."

"Which I will not at present hear, if ever I should be tempted to attend to it," replied Fenella; "I will not at this time take share in any conversation which does not treat of the important business in question."

"And I will, upon only one condition, accede to your kind determination," returned sir Robert; "that you will consent immediately to quit this place, and that habit, so ill assorted to the feminine graces of your heart, and consent to accept my brother's castle as your asylum, within the walls of which you may, unrestrained, return to that character to which you were born to add lustre, and which it must have been a stern necessity to have compelled you to relinquish."

The earl warmly seconded this proposal; and Fenella, without either declining their invitation, or promising to accept it,

again urged her companions to be brief in expressing their opinion of the course which was best to be pursued, as the morning would soon dawn, and it was highly necessary, that whoever were to leave the cavern, should quit it before the light of day was in the heavens.

In opposition to the judgment of Campsie, and the fears of the earl, sir Robert still warmly urged for liberty to depart; fearing, as he said, that if the present opportunity for quitting the caverns were denied him, he might be deprived of the satisfaction of leading on in person the armed vassals of his brother against the enemies of his liberty and peace. He appealed to the lady Fenella to second his suit.

She appeared anxious for the gratification of his wish, and inquired of the earl, if she undertook his safe conduct to the castle in disguise, whether it were not possible for his return to it to be retained

secret

secret from the household, till every preparation had been effected for the determined attack?

The earl replied — "that, with the exception of his old steward, Baldrummie, upon whose fidelity he could stake his life, and who must, during that period, be the attendant upon Dundonald's wants, in his private apartment, it was not requisite that any one should be acquainted with his having once more become an inhabitant of the castle—a precaution which he esteemed it judicious to take, notwithstanding the implicit faith which he had always found himself justified in placing in his vassals and domestics, the importance of the present concern rendering the exertion of every possible foresight not less commendable than provident."

These points being arranged, Andrew Campsie, who still appeared to apprehend that there might be danger united with sir Robert's too prematurely emerging from his present security, yielded a half-

reluctant consent to accompany the lady Fenella to the entrance which opened upon the forest, communicating with the foot of the Black Height, in order to examine whether there were any observers lurking nigh, before they permitted the earl and his brother to ascend; for themselves, they were careless of being seen abroad, for it was too common for the members of the band to prowl by night, either in pairs, or in small parties, to excite suspicion if they were encountered by any of their own community.

Previously to their departure, Andrew extinguished every lamp which had hitherto been burning in the cave, with the exception of one, which, from a slender wick, emitted only a faint ray; and this he placed in the inner recess, which had been the retreat of sir Robert Dundonald, sufficient light now existing in the rocky apartment only to exhibit forms, but not to distinguish countenances, or scarcely persons.

"I judge

"I judge this an unnecessary precaution," remarked Fenella, as she perceived the business upon which Andrew was engaged; "as this spot is known only to ourselves, it will not be approached, and thus, whether our friends be left in light or in obscurity, must be immaterial."

"It may be so; and such undoubtedly we have every reason to suppose is the fact," answered Andrew; "but too much care never can be used in a case of danger."

The earl applauded his caution, and sir Robert urged his friends to expedition in their proceedings; and it having been determined, that when they had taken the survey, which was the object of their present departure, Andrew should remain upon watch, at the mouth of the ascent into the forest, and that Fenella should alone return, and conduct them to the surface of the earth; and it having also been premised by the cautious Andrew, that the earl and his brother should main-

tain a strict silence whilst following the footsteps of Fenella in their passage thro' the bosom of the rock, they quitted the place.

As they proceeded, Andrew imagined that he observed a streak of light to dart across their path; but its motion was so rapid, that it had vanished before time had been given him to point it out to Fenella, who, on her part, paid little attention to his remark, having perceived him to be a character of by no means an uncommon nature—possessed of the most undaunted courage in acts of warfare and of danger, but nervous and timid in transactions which required skill and collection of mind.

They had continued to advance only a few moments, when Fenella almost believed that she herself made an observation similar to the one which Andrew had just communicated to her, that he had imagined himself to have beheld; but, doubtful whether her senses had deceived her,

her, and unwilling, even if it had been a reality, to make a confession which might increase the already-awakened apprehensions of Campsie, she did not communicate her idea to her companion.

As they drew near the entrance upon the forest, Fenella chancing to be in the advance of her friend, began first to ascend the steps; she had nearly reached the top, when a sound, resembling that of a few words, uttered in a half-raised and stifled voice, struck her ear: she listened attentively, and distinctly hearing the sound of footsteps, concluded that it could only have been Andrew suppressing a cough, to which he was fearful of giving freedom. Still she moved on, and having reached the entrance, she issued forth, and found that the darkness of the atmosphere, which was now more densely loaded with heavy clouds than even it had been at the period of her introducing Glenalpine into the cavern, rendered it impossible for her to discern objects, even at

the shortest distance—a circumstance which she felt encouraged to hope would constitute the unequivocal safety of the brothers in their way to the castle.

She remained at her station awaiting the arrival of Andrew, and was surprised that he came not. The moments passed into minutes; a considerable number of these had already elapsed, and still Andrew did not appear. Her suspicions now grew to alarm; she recollected what Campsie and herself had both imagined concerning the streaks of light darting across the rugged pathway of the rocky passage; she remembered also the footsteps which she had heard whilst ascending the stairs, and which she now believed had sounded more heavily than those of her companion. What could detain him? She wished to call upon him by name, but dreaded lest the sound of her voice might be heard by any individual besides himself, and a discovery of her purpose in being there be thus

thus obtained. With increasing anxiety she still lingered at the mouth of the cave, and when nearly a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and Andrew did not join her, unable to control her feelings, she began to retrace her way to the secret cavern.

She had descended the steps, but had proceeded only a short distance from them, when, on turning the point of an angle, she again beheld the approach of a faint light, and at the same moment heard the sound of voices and of footsteps. Conceiving that there could be no one near her, except members of the band, as no strangers had ever ventured to approach the haunt of the banditti, she quickly hid herself behind a projection of the rock, in order, if possible, to discover, unseen, who they were, and what their purpose in being there.

In a short time, drawing near to the spot where she was concealed, as they spoke, she heard one of them say—"Andrew is safe enough; it will be a busy

night's work for him, if he is able to break away from his chains by the morning."

"I am satisfied that he is secure," replied the other; "proceed therefore to repeat to me what you have seen and overheard this night."

The voice of the first speaker, Fenella, with a trembling heart, recognised to be that of Oscar Murdoch, and his companion she believed to be Fergus himself. Her ideas were not fallacious, and ere we proceed to recount the event of their appearance on the spot where we now find them, we must relate the cause by which they had been brought thither.

Ever since Dunbeith's encounter with Robina in Balquitther Castle, he had, as we have already stated, looked with an eye of hatred upon Campsie, on account of his having formerly been the intercessor for her life, when, if his own bloody purpose had at that time been executed, he would have been spared the mortification of beholding her within the walls of Balquitther

quitther, where her unexpected presence had utterly defeated those plans, for the purpose of executing which he had entered within them; and since that period, his favour had fallen on Murdoch, and Murdoch, satisfied to obtain advantages, whatever the channel through which they were procured, had hastily become his sedulous slave.

From the moment of sir Robert Dundonald's disappearance from the cell in which Dunbeith had held him prisoner, the suspicions of Murdoch had fallen upon Andrew Campsie as having been accessary to his escape; and judging by the high estimate at which he himself held the friendship of Fergus that it must be an unhealed wound in the breast of Andrew to have been dismissed from that confidential intercourse with Fergus to which he had, till of late, been solely admitted, he doubted not that Andrew would leave no means untried to revenge the mortification which he had endured; consequently, from

from the hour of sir Robert's supposed escape from the Devil's Cave, the watchful eye of Oscar had pursued Andrew at every hour, and at every turn; and he had that night succeeded in tracing his steps, and gaining a knowledge of the secret recess of which the existence had, till then, reposed in the single breast of Campsie.

This information he had no sooner gained, than he flew to report it to Fergus, recommending him instantly to summon his band, and regain his prisoner into his power; but the treachery so commonly exercised by the members of unlawful communities towards each other, rendered Dunbeith wary of crediting so vague a report, without a stable foundation for its belief; and placing his hand on the hilt of his dirk, in order to be assured that it was safe in his girdle, commanded Oscar to conduct him cautiously to the recess of which he had made the discovery, that his senses might receive conviction of the truth of his tale, before he proceeded to act upon his intelligence.

The

The door of the secret cavern towards which Murdoch led Dunbeith, was that by which Andrew and his companion were to pass out; as they arrived within its view, they beheld it partially open, but the faint glimmering of the light which now alone was burning in the inner recess, rendered them unable to distinguish who was within; and as Andrew alone spoke, whilst directing the brothers in what manner to conduct themselves on the return of their guide to the entrance upon the forest, they conjectured Andrew and sir Robert to be the only persons in the apartment.

As Fenella and Andrew came forth, Oscar and Dunbeith retired into the shade, to avoid being seen by them, and in return lost the opportunity of observing them.

"Andrew must be secured," said Fergus, the moment he believed them to be out of hearing—"Andrew must be secured, and all the rest is easy."

Oscar

Oscar was provided with a dark lantern, and Dunbeith directed him to turn the transparent side outwards, in order that they might gain some knowledge of the path which it was necessary for them to pursue to overtake Campsie; Murdoch obeyed, and cautiously following the steps of the unsuspecting Andrew, they sprang upon him at the foot of the steps which formed the ascent into the forest, and Dunbeith having muffled his cloak round his head, in order to prevent his cries from being heard, Murdoch seized his arms, and dragging him towards a cell in which they were accustomed to confine prisoners whom they could not bend into compliance to their will, chained him to a ring which was infixed in the floor, closed the door, and left him.

At the moment they were again returning to the vaulted passage leading to the secret cavern from the spot where they had left Andrew, Fenella had taken her concealed

concealed station behind a projection of the rock.

"How do we proceed about sir Robert?" inquired Murdoch; "shall I rush in and finish him at once?"

"No, by Heaven," replied Dunbeith; "with this hand will I sacrifice him, in revenge for the disappointment which I incurred in the Castle of Glenalpine. Lend me your sword—I have only my dirk; and should Andrew have armed him with any more potent weapon, he might obtain the mastery over me, for his aim is good and his arm strong; and his cause is moreover backed by heavy provocation, which never fails to add nerve to the heart and sinew to the hand of man."

With a heavy oath, Murdoch regretted that he likewise had no weapon upon him except his dirk, but proposed going in quest of a sword for Dunbeith.

"No, no," replied Fergus; "by quitting this spot for a single instant, we may lose all chance of revenge upon one from whom I have

I have long perceived that it is in vain to expect a satisfactory ransom; his blood, therefore, shall pay me for the maintenance which I have for twenty months past afforded him. I am never without my plans, and I will tell you how skilful management may supply the place of powerful arms. When we have advanced to a short distance from the door of the recess, I will secrete myself behind a fragment of the rock; you shall then go forward, and beckon to sir Robert to come forth. By the dimness of the light, he will not be able to distinguish you from Andrew. After he has joined you, proceed slowly along, and as he follows you, at the moment he is in the act of passing the spot where I shall lie hid, I will spring upon him and plant my dirk in his heart."

"It is ably devised," returned Murdoch: "I will be cautious to keep a few paces before him; but beware that you take your aim at the second man who passes you,

you, or my life may become the sacrifice, and your enemy escape the toils."

"In order that I may be secure in my proceedings," answered Fergus, "I must choose a spot for my hiding-place near the door of the recess, that I may be guided by the light which glimmers from within in taking my aim."

"You can't be wrong if you only remember to strike at the second man," rejoined Oscar.

"I will be wary," replied Fergus; "and now no more words, lest we be overheard by our victim: I will retire behind the first projection upon the path, near which the light from the apartment glances, and when I am behind it, beckon forth Dundonald."

"Enough," replied Murdoch; and they moved cautiously towards the secret cavern.

With a heart palpitating with fear and agony, Fenella pursued their steps. What could she do to rescue Glenalpine and his brother

brother from the hands of their murderers? for the discovery of the earl in company with sir Robert would, she doubted not, cause the destruction of both. Were she sufficiently bold to cry out, and forewarn them of the danger to which they were about to be exposed, the knowledge of their situation could render them no assistance, as they were both unarmed, and thus unable to defend their lives. A sudden, a wild idea entered her brain, and with a silent, but fervent prayer to Heaven to assist her cause, she resolved to essay it. She accordingly still pursued their steps, and when Dunbeith had taken his station behind a projecting angle, she remained standing on the opposite side of the path, a few paces nearer the entrance to the forest. In a few seconds she perceived Oscar approach the door of the apartment, and make a signal for those within to venture forth; immediately she saw a form which she was uncertain whether to decide that of the earl or sir Robert,

bert, step cautiously out; and when he had done so, Murdoch keeping his eye upon his intended victim, moved towards the spot where Dunbeith was concealed: at the moment he was on the point of passing it, Fenella glided before him, and walked slowly forward; another instant placed Murdoch opposite to Fergus—he beheld in him the second passer-by, and rushing upon him, plunged his dagger into the heart of his nefarious ally.

"Oh, merciful God! it is Murdoch whom you have wounded; you have slain your friend; curses on your erring hand!" exclaimed Oscar, and sunk fainting to the earth.

"Ah, Murdoch!" ejaculated Fergus, "why did you not keep the situation which it was agreed for you to hold?"

At the first sound of Oscar's voice, sir Robert flew back to the cavern, and snatching up the lamp, instantly returned with it to the spot.

"I behold my error," continued Dunbeith,

beith, as the glaring light displayed to him the dying features of his confederate; "but it is not yet too late to avenge thy death, and satisfy my own vengeance likewise: this blow," he added, upraising as he spoke the hand in which he bore his gory dirk—"this blow shall requite us both!"

The feeble and trembling Glenalpine in vain endeavoured to grasp his arm, and withhold him from approaching his unarmed brother; as well might he have endeavoured to repel the impetuous torrent in its foaming course; but the attempted struggle afforded a momentary impediment to the execution of his bloody design, and the permitted moment was not lost by the discerning and desperate Fenella; with the rapidity of the lightning's flash, she snatched the dirk of the fallen Oscar from his girdle, and at the instant Dunbeith was darting his blow at Dundonald, buried it in his breast.

"Hell!—furies!" burst in horrible and incoherent

incoherent accents from the lips of Dunbeith; and uttering imprecations dreadful to the ear of humanity, sunk weltering in his blood upon a fragment of the rock.

"Fenella!—preserved by thee!" ejaculated sir Robert. "Oh, glorious woman! what do I owe to thy friendship and fortitude!"

"Although long an unwilling member of a profession to which a blind destiny drove me," said Fenella, "never has my hand, till this moment, been stained with the blood of human being; but I trust, nay, I feel satisfied, that the frowns of Heaven will not descend upon a deed like this."

"I cannot speak my feelings," pronounced sir Robert—"sentiments of which language is incapable fill my heart; they are too oppressive for restraint, and yet I can devise no words to clothe them in."

The earl advanced towards Fenella, and clasped her in his arms.—"Forgive me," he said, "but I must fold you as a sister to my breast."

"By

"By any name but that," returned Fenella, "I am yours in true devotion; that name I abjure—friendship is the noblest sentiment of the human heart, and I will not degrade my late action by acknowledging it under any other title."

In rapturous joy, the earl imprinted the pressure of gratitude on the hand of his loved brother's preserver. Sir Robert stood apart, lost, as it appeared, in an abstraction of bewildered thought.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN a sufficient degree of composure for consideration and action was restored to the surviving characters of our drama, it was fully ascertained that the spirits of their enemies had fled their now-senseless forms, and by the advice of Fenella, they provided themselves with additional lights, and proceeded to seek Andrew Campsie, of the spot of whose confinement she had gained a tolerably-accurate idea, from the conversation which she had overheard between the late Dunbeith and his accomplice.

From Fenella's knowledge of the caverns, she with little difficulty led the way to the dungeon where, in agony unutterable, chained hand and foot to the rocky floor, lay Andrew Campsie; he

greeted their entrance with an acclamation of the wildest joy, and the despair with which they had found him overwhelmed, was at least equalled by the delight which he expressed at their safety, and the conquest which they had obtained over their oppressors.

A few minutes served to restore him to liberty, and his counsel then was, that they should remove the bodies of Fergus and Murdoch into the secret cavern, where he considered it impossible that any of their band could discover them, as it was evident that they had not possessed any confidential participators in the business of the night, to which they had themselves, through the interposition of Providence, fallen sacrifices; and that having done so, they should proceed to Balquitther Castle, in order to concert measures, as well for exonerating the fame of the lady Fenella's parent from the stigma under which it now laboured, as also for defending themselves in future against the attacks

attacks of the banditti who inhabited the Devil's Cave. He remarked that he was fearless of their being encountered on their way by any of the band, as the dawn of day being now in the heavens, they would be retired to their haunt, to enjoy that repose which they seldom tasted during the dead of night: in compliance, however, with the request of the anxious earl, sir Robert consented to envelop himself in the friar's garb which had formed the disguise of Fenella on her visit to the castle; and an additional plaid was procured for Glenalpine, which served alike to defend him from the morning dews, and to protect his person from observation.

These arrangements being made, and Andrew having secured the springs by which the doors of the private cavern could alone be opened, they ascended to the surface of the earth. The first tints of early dawn were as yet only streaking the grey sky, and the morning mists threw an obscurity over the scene, which rendered

the eye unable to pierce to any considerable distance.

They proceeded in silence, till they had nearly reached the Abbot's chapel; they were here saluted by the sound of voices, and as they continued to advance, upon the very spot where the earl had parted from Aleck Ferguson, he found him and old Baldrummie anxiously awaiting his return. They expressed the liveliest joy at beholding him, but the presence of his unknown companions checked the overflowings of their satisfaction; and the earl, apprehensive of the wild rejoicings, which he was certain that Baldrummie would evince on beholding sir Robert, attracting the attention of any passenger whom the obscurity of the hour might shade from their view, did not disclose to the faithful steward the long-lost treasure which he was supporting on his arm, till they had entered an apartment in the castle.

Baldrummie could not speak, his joy could only express itself in tears and gestures;

tures; and on being made briefly acquainted with the events of the night, he fell upon his knees, and kissed alternately the hands and feet of Andrew Campsie and the lady Fenella.

When some degree of tranquillity was restored to the minds of the friendly group, the earl prevailed upon the lady Fenella to place herself under the care of Mrs. Baldrummie, and receive at her hands those attentions and services which her sex, and the extraordinary exertion that she had lately been enduring, could not but render highly acceptable to her feelings.

"Not to avail myself of the kindness which you offer, would make me appear insensible to the interest which I am sure you take in my accommodation," she replied; "I will therefore prove to you that I feel grateful for your friendship, by not hesitating to accept it."

"Sleep soundly and securely, dear lady," said Andrew; "our late companions can

have no idea of the spot of our present retirement; as Dunbeith and Murdoch are likewise lost to them, they will consider us absent with them upon some expedition, to which we have been conducted by our late leader."

Fenella now bade a friendly good-night to all, which, with the exception of sir Robert, was returned to her with the unanimous voice of cordiality and affection; with his hand clasped to his head, he sunk upon a chair in a distant corner of the apartment.

After so long and painful a separation, the earl and Dundonald could not easily relinquish each other's society, and their old and faithful servant, Baldrummie, was permitted to remain their companion; and after some topics immediately connected with the events of the night had been discussed, the earl reverted to the confession which sir Robert had made to him, of his being the husband of Robina.

Baldrummie listened to the words of sir Robert

Robert with an attention which almost endeavoured to pierce into his soul, as he repeated the avowal of his marriage; he said that he had long loved Robina, and, fearful that his mother should deny her consent to their union, on account of the inferiority of her birth to his own, and still unable to live in happiness with himself, without securing her his, he had prevailed on her privately to give him her hand; a mutual agreement having been made between them, that the secret should be inviolably maintained by them both till the decease of the countess.

"Oh mercifu' God!" exclaimed Baldrummie, in a voice convulsed with agony, "what ha' I dune! The sin is a' my ain; ye'r fautless; on me fa' the crime and the punishment! I am a wicked, a miserable auld man! I could tear my grey hair, and rend my heart i' the pangs o' my misery and repentance. Oh God abune! what can I do? what can I say? I canna cry, 'Thy will be dune!' for I ha' assisted to

frustrate thy decrees and dispensations. Oh, wae's me! miserable, miserable auld man!" At the conclusion of this apostrophe, he burst into a violent flood of tears, and animation appeared almost to forsake his frame.

His extraordinary conduct equally surprised and alarmed the brothers, and they earnestly and impatiently besought him to explain his words.

"I canna speak," he replied, "I canna think, till ye answer me yae question. The church has made ye yen, but I trust, I trust and pray, that the affection o' yer hearts is the only union, beyond the bonds o' religion, that subsists between ye?"

"Robina is, as yet, my wife only by name, if it is this particular which you wish to have resolved," returned the agitated sir Robert.

"Oh, God be praised! God be praised!" ejaculated Baldrummie; "boundless is his mercy, endless his goodness to his created beings: his beneficence has preserved ye baith

baith fra' misery, fra' destruction, fra' eternal torment. Oh, my guid maister, the truth maun be disclosed now; but be na alarmed, bear the will o' Heaven manfully —Robina is yer ain sister."

The surprise and consternation with which the brothers were affected at this disclosure on the part of Baldrummie, may be readily conceived, and with the most anxious solicitude they besought him to explain the extraordinary confession which he had just made to them; with which request Nicholas Baldrummie, after a few minutes given to recollection and the composure of his feelings, complied to the following effect.

The late earl of Glenalpine had, as we have already been informed, been the father of two sons only, named David and Robert. David, as we have also seen, was, from his infancy, of a delicate and fragile constitution; whilst Robert, on the contrary, was, from his birth, robust and healthy; but as an example that the te-

nure of life is equally precarious with the strong as with the weak, about the period that Robert had attained the tenth month of his age, he was seized with an illness, which in a few days hurried him to the grave.

With the exception of his surviving son, the earl of Glenalpine had no male relatives but distant ones, and between these and himself a point of law, which had been many years in agitation, had sown an implacable hatred—a sentiment which existed with such strength in the breast of the earl, that he would sooner have beheld the meanest beggar in possession of his name and domains, than have died under the conviction of their descending to those whom he abhorred. To this end, fearing that the life of David might be of but short duration, and also believing that the years of his countess could give him no expectation of an increase of progeny, he formed the resolution of substituting some other child in the place of the

the deceased Robert, who, in the event of David's death, might prove a bar to the success of his hated relatives. Baldrummie alone was made the confidant of his plan; and Baldrummie, in compliance with the wishes of his revered master, prevailed upon his sister, and her husband, Hugh Stewart, to permit their son, who was of the same age as the late Robert, and, like him, also possessing a robust and healthy constitution, to be substituted in his stead; and by the skilful management of Baldrummie and his wife, in introducing the young stranger into the castle, and privately interring the lamented being whose place he was called upon to supply, the circumstance was effected unknown to any of the secondary members of the earl's household.

In return for their condescension to his desires, the earl purchased for Hugh Stewart and his wife, a small but fruitful estate in the Linn of Mackarsey, which they had heretofore only rented, and where they

ultimately met an untimely grave, from the barbarity of Fergus Dunbeith and his ravaging band; and, during their lifetime, they frequently received invitations from Glenalpine to visit Balquitther Castle, where they beheld their transplanted offspring under those restrictions which were prescribed by Providence and the peculiar situation in which they were placed.

Here ended the short narrative of Baldrummie, for the truth of which he authorised them to call upon father Celestine, who, with the exception of himself, had alone been privy to the funeral of the real Robert Dundonald.

"Unfortunate that I am!" exclaimed Robert—"I am thus alike miserable, either as Dundonald or Stewart. The lady Fenella, I hesitate not to confess, at one period of my life, possessed a greater degree of influence over my senses than any other woman whom I have ever known; but when all traces of her had for many years been lost to me, and I judged that I should

should never behold her again, my regards turned themselves, in reparation of my loss, to the mild and engaging virtues of Robina. Now, now they are both lost to me. I value not the privation of wealth or title; and in Robina, as a sister, I possess a treasure of sympathizing affection; but can a hope exist within my breast, that the lady Fenella Lochiel will ever accept the hand of the simple Robert Stewart?"

The earl appeared absorbed in thought, and a silence of some minutes ensued; it was at length broken by Glenalpine.—"I think," he said, "that I am too well acquainted with the nobleness of lady Fenella's mind, to believe that any discovery which does not affect the principles of his heart, can withdraw her regards from the man whom she has once honoured with her esteem. At all events, my brother—for as such I ever must and shall consider you—at all events, set your heart at rest—Fenella shall be yours."

The

The earl forbore to enlarge upon the declaration which he had made, or to explain the ideas which were passing in his mind, and proceeded to relate to Robert the dreadful state into which his sister had been thrown, by the alarm which she had received on the night of her encounter with Fergus Dunbeith, amidst the ruins of the monastery of St. Cyrus, and the absence of mind with which she had since that period been afflicted.

Baldrummie proposed that her brother should visit her, believing that his presence might recall her scattered senses, as his wife, he said, had frequently distinguished her to be dwelling, in scarcely-audible murmurs, on his name; and adding, that he did not judge it impossible, as Fergus had invited her to meet him in the name of sir Robert Dundonald, that she might suppose him acquainted with his fate; and that her alarm for his safety, together with her entertaining this suspicion, might be the foundation of her present

sent malady. Her brother and the earl concurred with him in opinion, and immediately sent the steward to give intimation of their intended visit to his wife.

The light of day was now in the heavens, and on entering the chamber of Robina, they found her attended by a female domestic and the affectionate Mrs. Baldrummie. She was sitting in her bed, with her eyes fixed on vacancy, and sweetly chanting a plaintive ditty, which she had been accustomed to sing to the late countess; and the beams of the sun, as they faintly glanced on her pale but lovely countenance, displayed her features animated with all the fervent expression of a sorrowing Madona. She regarded them not as they approached her, till Robert took her hand, and in the gentlest accents addressed himself to her. Robina turned her eyes upon him with a steady gaze, a faint smile quivered on her lips, placidity appeared to return to her countenance, and composure to her voice.—"I knew—I knew

knew you were in heaven," she said, "and that I should one day meet you there; the blessed hour is come, and we shall part no more;" and as she ceased speaking, she sunk fainting on his breast.

On reviving, Robina appeared composed and happy: her eyes were first bent upon Robert Stewart; from him they wandered to the earl, and thence to the other persons whom the apartment contained.—"Oh, how happy I am," she said, "that we should meet on this blessed spot! This moment recompenses me for all my sufferings." And it was not without considerable difficulty that she could be convinced that she was still upon that earth from which she had believed herself removed; and when the truth became apparent to her, with an ardent and eloquent gaze at Robert Stewart, she burst into a flood of tears.

The earl considered it necessary that the relation in which she stood to Robert should be immediately disclosed to her; but

but judging that, in her present weak state, it was requisite that the truth should be unfolded to her by a gradual and cautious procedure, he proposed to Robert that they should retire from the apartment, and submit the execution of the arduous task to her uncle and aunt Baldrummie.

On quitting the chamber, they repaired to the private apartment of the earl, which they had no sooner entered, than Glenalpine, clasping Robert to his breast, said—"As brothers have we from infancy lived together, as brothers have we loved and respected each other, and let this embrace assure you that we are brothers still. As a brother I shall ever continue to consider you; and that you are not actually so, shall never be known to a single individual besides those already acquainted with that secret, except the lady Fenella Lochiel; hers is a heart of such inestimable worth, that it were a sin of the blackest magnitude to impose on her a deception."

"And

"And upon reflection," replied Robert, "I dare almost venture to hope that the intercession of a friend like yourself may prove her the disinterested being whom it would glad my soul to find her."

"Dismiss your doubts of her future conduct," answered the earl; "for myself, I have never entertained any. And now, after the repose which nature requires for her refreshment has been taken by you, prepare yourself to accompany Andrew Campsie, whom it becomes us in future to know only as sir James M'Culloch, to the king; and having, on your part, sought redress of majesty for your past wrongs, and your companion having presented his claim for the restoration of the lady Fenella to her rights and title, return hither, and I doubt not to greet you with tidings which shall smooth with joy your future course through life."

The impatient Robert permitted himself only a few hours to prepare for his journey, and the sun was scarcely in the meridian

meridian of heaven, ere, accompanied by sir James M'Culloch and a numerous train of armed domestics, he set out on his way to the residence of the king at Holyrood House; but resolutely refusing, at his departure, to bid farewell to the mistress of his heart—"I will never see her again," he said to the earl at parting, "unless she condescends to receive me as her destined husband. Should she refuse me the only boon upon which I consider life worth holding, we have beheld each other for the last time."

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

On their arrival at the court, the reception of Robert Stewart, in the character of the younger brother of Glenalpine, was of the most flattering nature; and scarcely three days were permitted to pass, ere he was provided with a military escort, destined to attack the freebooters in their stronghold in the Devil's Cave; of which, at his own particular request, the command was permitted to sir Robert himself.

Midday being the hour at which the banditti were most usually to be found in their haunt, was the season appointed for his attack; and having stationed detached parties of his force in those situations by which he apprehended they might attempt to effect their escape, and used no inconsiderable caution in approaching the mouth of the cavern,

cavern, the unsuspecting band, overpowered by the number of their assailants, and the surprise with which their unexpected presence affected them, fell easy victims into the hands of the troops.

Having achieved his desired conquest, although the towers of Balquitther Castle were within his view, sir Robert did not permit himself to turn aside from the essential business in which he was engaged to visit those whom they contained, but contenting himself with sending thither a messenger charged with the news of his success, proceeded to escort his prisoners in person to Edinburgh. The king greeted him with every mark of pleasure for the service which he had performed to the public, in having brought the lawless band to punishment; and in the same voice in which he doomed the culprits to expiate their crimes by death, he commanded sir Robert to name a boon by which he could requite him for those exertions on his part

to which society at large was indebted for the detection of the ravaging horde.

"May it then please your most gracious majesty," replied sir Robert, "to extend your favour towards me in the preservation of the lives of these unhappy men; and may they, from my clemency, learn humanity towards others! But I revoke my petition, unless they immediately enter into the military force of their country, subject to any conditions which your majesty may deem it meet to impose upon them."

The request of sir Robert was received by the king and his nobles with enthusiastic admiration of his heart from whose lips it had proceeded, and immediately sanctioned by the voice of majesty, and communicated to the prisoners, who were commanded to acknowledge the humanity of their preserver, by receiving the enfranchisement from death, which his mercy had extended towards them, upon their uncovered knees. The ceremony was performed

performed without delay, and the banditti sworn to their allegiance; and the purpose of Robert's visiting Edinburgh being now accomplished, he would immediately have bent his way towards Fife; but the king would not so easily forego the society of one whose noble conduct had so warmly challenged his esteem and admiration; and after Dundonald had passed a few days at his court, and promised not to neglect visiting Holyrood House in future, he was permitted to depart, loaded with the favour and eulogies of his sovereign. But sir James M'Culloch was not his companion; the plea which he was urging to the throne in behalf of the lady Fenella Lochiel requiring time for its due investigation, ere the voice of royalty could pronounce a decision upon its validity. Sir James, however, had not neglected to cause information to be conveyed to the king, how greatly conducive to the happiness of sir Robert Dundonald a favourable

able issue to the suit of the lady Fenella would prove; and with the greatest satisfaction had learnt, that the knowledge of this circumstance had communicated an interest in her fate to the heart of the king, which had awakened his warmest attention to her cause.

The sounding of the horn at the outer gate had no sooner announced the return of sir Robert to Balquitther Castle, than a tumult of joy prevailed through its walls; and at the entrance into the great hall, the first beloved object which presented itself to his sight was Robina. Her countenance denoted composure of mind, and ecstacy of soul. Clasping him to her breast—"Oh, my loved brother!" she exclaimed, "how transporting is the moment at which I first hail you by that tender name! From infancy I loved you, though unconscious of the cause; the will of fate has now disclosed the secret influence which pervaded my senses; and I may

may now, therefore, unblushingly confess the love which flows from so pure a source."

Sir Robert held her in rapture to his heart, and then turned to meet the congratulations of Glenalpine; to which he had scarcely replied, ere the earl, leading forward the lady Fenella, said—"As the proudest reward of your sufferings and your merits, I am permitted to place this hand in yours, upon the terms which you have already informed me can alone communicate unalloyed felicity to your heart. As your destined bride, then, my brother, accept the hand of the inestimable lady Fenella."

"Your brother!" falteringly pronounced sir Robert; "was it not agreed between us, in the instance of this amiable being, to banish all deception from our proceedings?"

"In the appellation which I have just given you," replied the earl, "there is no deception; Robina is my affianced bride,

and you are consequently my destined brother."

Sir Robert looked at his sister for a confirmation of the earl's assertion; the averted countenance and blushes of Robina conveyed a satisfactory affirmative to his silent inquiry, and the earl said—"I was selected by Heaven as the preserver of her existence, and she has received me as the guardian of her future life."

"And may I hope?" ejaculated sir Robert, falling on his knee before the lady Fenella.

"The season of hope," she interrupted him by saying, "is past; I have long since ratified your doom. Your preference fell on me when greatly your inferior in the scale of human estimation; and shall I act less disinterestedly towards you in return? Forbid it, every honourable principle of the human mind! As Robert Stewart, I accept your hand; as sir Robert Dundonald, and brother of the earl of Glenalpine, I only derive pleasure in greeting you, because

cause it evinces that my heart is not singular in bestowing on you its esteem."

Nothing was now wanting to complete the happiness of the inhabitants of Balquitther Castle but the return of sir James M'Culloch, with the sanction of royalty for the restoration of the lady Fenella to her lands and title; and scarcely a week had elapsed, when the object of their wishes appeared to relieve their anxieties, charged with the most honorary investiture of the lady Fenella to the rank and revenues of her deceased parent, and himself enjoying an unqualified pardon from the king, in recompence for the services which he had ultimately extended towards the daughter of his loyal and lamented subject, sir Allan Lochiel.

At length the morning which was destined to witness the union of the happy Robina and her brother with the chosen partners of their hearts, arose in smiles emblematical of the joyful event on which it shone. The lustre of satisfaction animated

even the aged eye of the venerable father Celestine, and the delight of the happy domestics appeared to emulate the joy of their superiors. The deep-toned organ sounded the peal of rapture; the seal of their inseparability was fixed; the holy man had stood forward to pronounce his blessing on their future days, and the first kiss of nuptial bliss had passed their lips, when suddenly, the earl, raising his eyes towards heaven, sunk upon his knee on the step of the altar near to which he had been standing, and an expression of more than human beatitude took possession of his features. His companions gazed on him in silence, for they almost believed themselves able to divine the cause of his abstraction from the scene of joy; and their ideas were not fallacious. The same music which had before, on that very spot, greeted his senses, had now attracted his attention; and his eyes, in following the sound, had fixed on the same brilliant cloud which he had before beheld. As in the former

former instance, the cloud had opened, and the protecting spirit of his race appeared to his view; and having remained for a few moments in his sight, with a smile of pleasure and congratulation, it again faded away to the same soft strains which had accompanied its appearance; and from that hour peace and tranquillity reigned in the family of Glenalpine, and the propitious spirit ceased its visits to their happy descendants.

FINIS.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

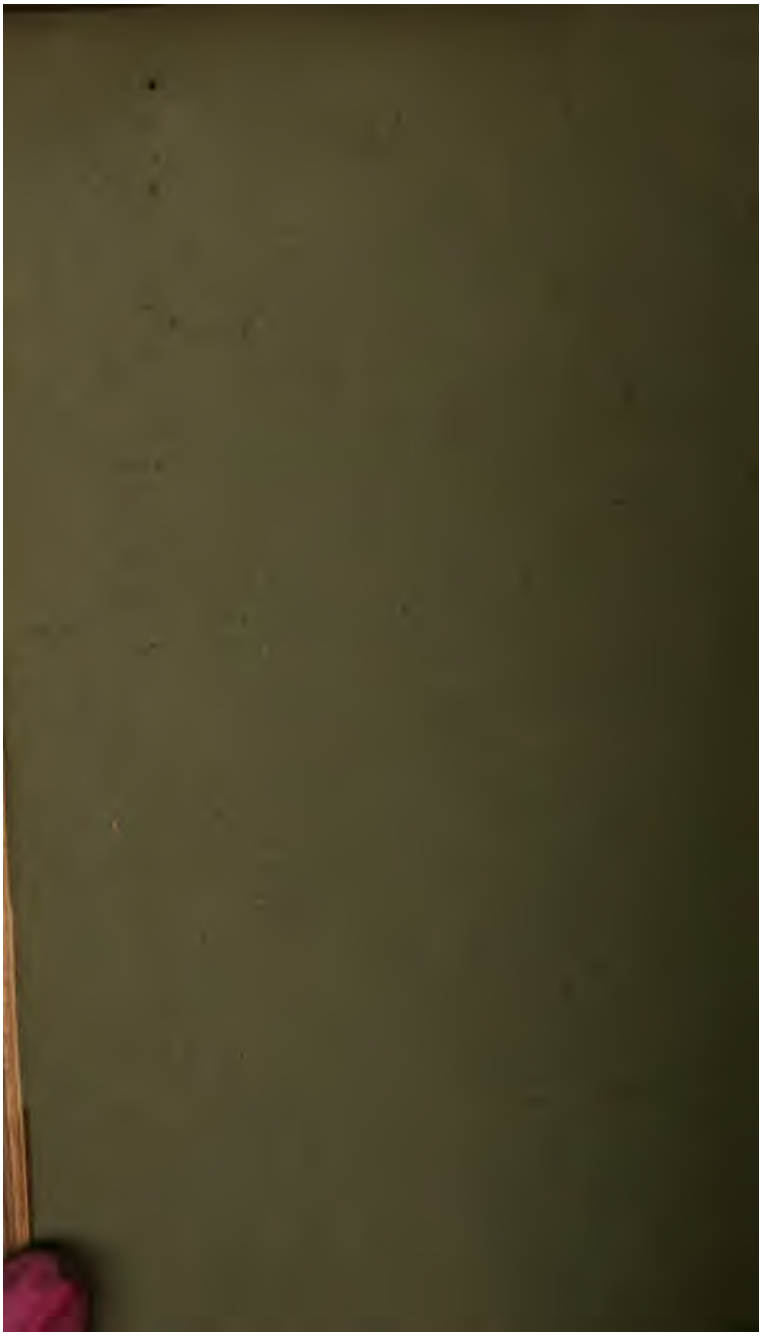
NEW PUBLICATIONS

PRINTED FOR

A. K. NEWMAN & CO.

AT THE

Minerva-Press,

LEADENHALL-STREET, LONDON.

	£	s.	d.
Prejudice, or Physiognomy, by Azile D'Arcy, 3 vols...	0	15	0
Jessy, or the Rose of Donald's Cottage, by the Author of the Bravo of Bohemia, 4 vols.	1	2	0
Yamboo, or the North American Slave, 2d edition, by the same, 3 vols.....	0	15	0
A Bride and no Wife, by Henrietta Rouviere Moss, 4 vols.....	1	2	0
The Foundling of Devonshire, or Who is she? by Miss C. D. Haynes, 5 vols.....	1	7	6
Leap Year, or a Woman's Privilege, by Selina Davenport, 5 vols.....	1	5	0
Howard Castle, or Romance from the Mountains, by a North Briton, 5 vols.	1	7	6
The Deserter, by the Author of Montreithe, and Husband Hunters, 4 vols.....	1	2	0
Edric the Forester, by Mrs. Ker, 3 vols.	0	15	0
Beauchamp, or the Wheel of Fortune, 4 vols.....	1	2	0
Robertina, by Catherine G. Ward, 2 vols.	0	10	0
Anti-Delphine, by Mrs. Byron, 2 vols.....	0	10	0
Amabel, by Mrs. Harvey, 2d edition	1	4	0
The Balance of Comfort, or the Old Maid and the Married Woman, by Mrs. Ross, 4th edition, 3 vols.....	0	16	0
Mademoiselle de la Fayette, by Madame Genlis, 2 vols.	0	10	6
Secrets in every Mansion, or the Surgeon's Memorandum Book, by Anne of Swansea, 5 vols.....	1	7	6